United Nations A/73/PV.1

General Assembly
Seventy-third session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 18 September 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the President of the General Assembly

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I declare open the seventy-third regular session of the General Assembly.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Statement by the President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to address members for the first time as President of the United Nations General Assembly. I am speaking with a profound sense of responsibility and commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and its founding principles, and in the utmost respect for the peoples of the world, whose well-being is our principal goal. I am honoured to represent my beloved region of Latin America and the Caribbean, a region of peace that is committed to human rights.

The presidency of the General Assembly is also an honour for my country, Ecuador, and a reflection of its support for multilateralism and its people's sense of international solidarity and cooperation. But this year we must go beyond the national political and governmental agenda that has been my priority for the past 11 years. I want to assure the Assembly that from today, I will be working under the blue flag of our Organization for the shared interests and decisions of all of its 193 States Members.

Since I am only the fourth woman to occupy this position in the 73 years of the life of the United Nations, I want to reiterate that I am dedicating my presidency to all the women in the world — to women who are entering politics, to those who are struggling for equality in the workplace, to women and girls who are victims of violence and to young girls and adolescents who are demanding access to quality information and education. Three great women have presided over the Assembly in the past 72 years: Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, of India, in 1953; Angie E. Brooks, of Liberia, in 1969; and Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in 2006. My tribute and homage goes to them and to the legacy they have left at the Organization.

I also want to thank my predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, whose work during the seventy-second session was exemplary. I intend to build on his achievements and good practices, especially his morning dialogues and monthly coordination meetings with the principal organs of the Organization. We thank President Lajcák for his leadership, which has always included inclusive dialogue and a cooperative spirit. We

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-28899 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

wish him every success in his work as he returns to his beloved country, our sister Republic of Slovakia.

I have tried to learn as much as possible in these short weeks of transition. In that time, I have had the support of the Permanent Mission of Ecuador, the representatives of the States that have contributed to the staff of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and the support of the professional staff of the United Nations system. I want to inform members that we are ready to begin the work of the Assembly. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his support during the transition period and for his advice and commitment to the Organization. In accordance with my mandate from the States, I am ready to support the Secretary-General in all his initiatives aimed at strengthening the operations of the United Nations system and thereby to improve the efficiency and impact of the Organization's work in the field.

The General Assembly is not just the most democratic and representative organ of the United Nations, it is a forum encompassing the most diverse knowledge, cultures and professions of the world. In fact, it constitutes the world's largest and most influential centre of global thought. Our thinking, knowledge and vision set the standards for cooperation among our nations and between our Governments and peoples. Every day we work together to search for solutions to the most difficult problems facing humankind.

In the past 72 years, the Assembly has produced and codified a body of the most important aspects of international law and human rights. Despite our many achievements, however, great challenges remain. We have made significant progress in decolonization, but there is still a pending agenda. Every day we work together to build peace and prevent conflicts, but the scourge of war is still present. We have made significant progress with agreements to protect the environment and slow climate change, but nature and the planet still continue to suffer and are at serious risk, even threatening the survival of humankind. We have reached important agreements protecting indigenous peoples and nationalities, but they remain the poorest of the poor. We have made significant progress on the development agenda, starting with the Millennium Development Goals, but significant challenges remain, and they are now included in the Sustainable Development Goals. Those are just a few examples.

We must all be aware that the Organization still has many challenges and obligations. Some are beginning to be met, such as addressing the migration phenomenon through an internationally agreed-on instrument, which will undoubtedly be one of the most important milestones that we will witness this session. It is my hope that we will be able to witness the fulfilment of other major outstanding obligations of the Organization, such as resolving the situation of the brotherly Palestinian people. We must also adapt to new times. The Assembly must address the impact of new technologies on the world of work, communications and social coexistence, for example.

The contribution of the United Nations to humankind has been immense. However, its impact and relevance would be even greater if our peoples felt that what we were discussing and agreeing on here was — as is indeed the case — something that directly concerned them. We have not succeeded in getting our peoples to connect our work to their daily lives. Making the United Nations more relevant to all people will therefore be the main focus of my work during this session. If we can manage to establish that connection in the short term, it will have a double effect. First, it will bring us as an Organization closer to society, to the people, thereby highlighting our role in their lives and their most pressing needs; and secondly, our peoples would become our greatest allies in implementing the agreements we reach in the Assembly at the national level.

Please allow me to be a little didactic, therefore, and to address those who perhaps do not know what is currently going on in the Assembly. Today is the beginning of a new session of the General Assembly, the most important representative and decision-making organ of the United Nations. Over the next 12 months, the 193 States represented here will debate approximately 330 draft resolutions on an equal number of topics, all of great global interest. We have scheduled nearly 100 plenary meetings and an indefinite number of working meetings and negotiations.

This year we will also take up 34 mandates on various topics of global interest and hold 18 summits, forums and high-level meetings. Finally, during this session we will be responsible for leading and facilitating 13 intergovernmental processes on extremely important issues, such as Security Council reform, the revitalization of the General Assembly and the alignment of the General Assembly with the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development. That may sound very obvious to all of us, but I assure everyone that it is not obvious to the great majority of people. For that reason, I have emphasized to the communication teams of the Secretariat the importance of further highlighting the work of the Assembly. Communication should therefore be a priority during this session.

The items on the regular programme of work and the mandates entrusted to me are many and will be duly implemented, with everyone's support. However, as usual, after my dialogues with many people in the Assembly, including leaders and representatives of several States, and after analysing the most pressing global issues, I can now propose the following seven priority themes for this session.

First, gender equality and the empowerment of women must remain a priority until they are definitively achieved. I will promote the empowerment of women and girls from all fronts. Life is better for all of us when everyone is on a level playing field and human rights are accessible to all, without discrimination.

Second, we will prioritize the promotion and implementation of the new global compacts on migration and refugees. It is our duty to seek protection for millions of refugees around the world and direct our efforts towards safe, orderly and regular migration. The Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, to be held in December in Morocco, will be a major milestone in that direction.

Third, we will prioritize the creation of decent work opportunities for young people, women and persons with disabilities. That will be one of the most important challenges for public policies related to the development and sustainability of social security systems.

Fourth, I will work to bring greater attention to environmental protection. The General Assembly must become a voice that calls for public awareness of pollution by plastic waste as a pervasive environmental hazard that affects the health and well-being of people and ecosystems around the world. We will also pave the way for the United Nations 2019 Climate Summit, announced by the Secretary-General.

Fifth, we will prioritize the importance of strengthening political and social commitment to persons with disabilities. There is still a need for greater awareness of that population's specific needs. Accessibility, inclusive and quality education and decent employment are challenges faced by humankind's largest minority, persons with disabilities.

Sixth, we will prioritize the revitalization of the United Nations. We will work in three areas: implementing reforms of the United Nations system; strengthening the process of revitalizing the General Assembly to optimize its working methods and enhance its deliberative and decision-making role; and continuing the process of the reform of the Security Council, in line with the will and commitment of States.

Seventh, we will make peace and security a hugely important priority. The armed conflicts that are currently ongoing can only cause all of us the deepest pain. The security problems experienced by many of our societies also represent an enormous challenge for Governments and for the Organization. The Assembly must become the principal peacebuilding organ through a preventive approach. Sustainable peace must be rooted in dialogue and understanding, and facilitating that dialogue will be my priority. In addition, we all recognize the fundamental role that young people play in building safe societies and preventing conflicts. The General Assembly must promote efforts to ensure that young people have greater opportunities and thereby prevent the kinds of conditions that inevitably lead them to violent extremism.

Two major concepts and strategic visions will be part of my work this year — peace and human rights for all, and strengthened multilateralism with global leadership and shared responsibilities. The seven priorities I mentioned are geared around those concepts and, while ambitious, will guide my work during this session to achieve our goal of building a more relevant United Nations for all.

One of the most effective ways to measure the Organization's impact is undoubtedly in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The greatest indicator of the success of the work of the Assembly is the well-being of people, in their daily lives and prospects for the future. That impact will ultimately ensure that the United Nations continues to be relevant and valuable to the world. The agenda is enormous. My role will be to encourage dialogue and facilitate consensus-building during consultations and ongoing discussions so as to enable us to take action-oriented decisions.

We are now beginning a new session, with an intense agenda for the final week of September. We are finalizing preparations for the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit, to be held on 24 September. The event, in honour of the hundredth anniversary of Madiba's birth, will provide all States with a historic opportunity to present their views on how to prevent conflict and give renewed impetus to building peaceful societies. The nine days of the general debate will begin on 25 September. Once again, leaders will be able to listen and be heard in the only forum that exists for the purpose, the General Assembly. It is in this Hall that all nations are equal, with the same seat, the same button to vote and the same right to ask to speak, as well as to listen and be heard. I encourage delegations to be present in the General Assembly Hall when our Heads of State and Government deliver their statements. It is only by knowing and listening to each other that we will be able to advance our common aspirations for peace, security, human rights and sustainable development.

I want to assure members that, with the participation of all States, I will support and lead efforts to make a success of all the high-level meetings and conferences, on health, climate change, South-South cooperation and middle-income countries, among other mandates. It is in my interest, as well as that of members, to ensure that our deliberations lead to useful and concrete recommendations. As I said on the day of my election (see A/72/PV.92), I want to assure the Assembly that I will abide with absolute responsibility by the code of ethics for the President of the General Assembly and by the precepts of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

During this session we will mark the seventieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Resolution 217/A (III), of 10 December 1948, was perhaps one of the most important resolutions ever adopted by the Assembly, as it marked the beginning of a new era, that of the universalization of human rights. We are sometimes not aware that every day we are making history with the resolutions adopted in this Hall. Let us continue together to make history and to build a world that is more egalitarian and free, more sustainable and respective of nature and with greater inclusivity and solidarity.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me start by again congratulating Her Excellency Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés of Ecuador on her election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

(*spoke in English*)

Ms. Espinosa Garcés brings wide-ranging diplomatic and intergovernmental experience to the role, as well as deep knowledge of the international agenda. She already knows the United Nations quite well, having served as Permanent Representative in Geneva. Of course, in addition to being the first woman to become her country's Permanent Representative, she is now the fourth to serve as President of the General Assembly — and the first in more than a decade. I am sure that additional perspective will enrich and advance our work. Your presence, Madam President, is a guarantee that gender parity is on the move.

We have a busy session ahead of us. We need action for peacekeeping, gender parity, financing for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, empowerment for the world's young people, urgent steps to end poverty and conflict, and much else. I encourage members to tell their leaders to come to next week's high-level week ready to be bold and forge solutions to our global challenges. Looking further ahead, there are important gatherings on the calendar that can solidify progress on key global challenges.

The twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will gather in Poland in December. Climate impacts continue to worsen and accelerate, and our actions and ambitions are nowhere near where they need to be to avoid catastrophe. Fortunately, technology is on our side, and much is happening towards a green economy that we can build on. Let us make sure that Katowice is a success. Also in December, Heads of State and Government will meet in Marrakech to formally adopt a landmark global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. Implementing the compact should help us reap the widespread benefits of migration while protecting people against dangerous journeys, exploitation and discrimination. I look forward to its formal adoption.

The Assembly has a vital role to play on those and all other issues. At a time of fragmentation and polarization, the world needs the Assembly to show the value of international cooperation. The Secretariat and I are committed to supporting and strengthening the ways in which we work together. I wish you, Madam

President, and all Member States every success as we strive to achieve our shared goals.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Item 141 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/73/367/Rev.1)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In keeping with established practice, I would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/73/367/Rev.1, which contains the text of a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that four Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in document A/73/367/Rev.1?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the seventy-third session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that, for the seventy-third session, the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Antigua and Barbuda, Chile, China, Finland, Ghana, Palau, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone and the United States of America.

May I take it that the States that I have just mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: Delegations are reminded that credentials should be submitted to the Office of Legal Affairs, as announced in the *Journal of the United Nations*.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Organization of work of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly

Letter from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences (A/73/369)

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: The Assembly will now turn its attention to document A/73/369, which contains the text of a letter dated 4 September 2018 from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly. Members are aware that, pursuant to section 1, paragraph 7, of Assembly resolution 40/243, of 18 December 1985, no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during the main part of a regular session of the Assembly, unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

On the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, authorization is thus sought for the following subsidiary organs: the Committee on Relations with the Host Country; the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/the United Nations Population Fund/the United Nations Office for Project Services; the United Nations Board of Auditors; the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations, the Specialized Agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency; and the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to authorize those subsidiary organs of the Assembly to meet during the main part of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.

United Nations A/73/PV.2

General Assembly

Seventy-third session

Official Records

2nd plenary meeting
Friday, 21 September 2018, 10.15 a.m.
New York

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is our sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, who passed away on 18 August 2018.

(*spoke in English*)

It is with great sadness that we begin the seventy-third session of our Assembly by acknowledging a great loss — that of Kofi Annan, who will surely be remembered as one of the outstanding leaders of this Organization. But it is also eminently fitting that we remember him on this day — a day fixed by the Assembly 17 years ago, on his watch and with his strong support, as the International Day of Peace, for no one laboured more tirelessly or consistently for the cause of peace than did Kofi Annan.

Kofi Annan was a great Secretary-General because he understood that peace cannot be achieved in isolation. He subscribed fully to the principles set out in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations and knew that they are mutually interdependent. Succeeding generations would not be saved from the scourge of war unless and until human beings can have faith — faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small; unless and until conditions are established under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained; unless and until we succeed in promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

"In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" was, indeed, the title of Kofi Annan's report to the Assembly in 2005 (A/59/2005), in which he asserted that peace and security, development and human rights are the three indispensable and mutually reinforcing pillars of the Organization. Five years earlier, he had submitted his millennium report (A/54/2000), using as its title the very first words of the Charter, "We the peoples". It fell to him to guide us from the twentieth century into the twenty-first, and he knew well that in the twenty-first century the United Nations would have to convince the peoples of the world — not just the Governments — that it was doing something useful for them, something that offered them hope of a better and more rewarding life.

His genius lay in his ability to enlist Member States in a common effort to achieve that end. Perhaps no other Secretary-General could have persuaded the Assembly, not only to mark the year 2000 by convening a summit, but also to commission a report that articulated the aspirations of humankind as it embarked on the new millennium and formed the basis of the Millennium Declaration, including the Millennium Development Goals. Quite rightly, he cited that as his greatest achievement. It was thanks in large part to his influence that those Goals included pledges to ensure that by 2015, girls and boys would have equal access

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

Accessible document Please recycle

to all levels of education and that, by the same date, we would have halted and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria and other major diseases. Such causes were very dear to his heart, and he continued to devote himself to them after leaving office, notably through the work of his foundation, which I hope will continue.

He reminded Member States regularly that empowering women meant empowering whole nations, that there is no tool for development more effective than women's advancement, and that no other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity and promote health or increase the chances of education for the next generations. He often urged the entire international community to remember that promoting gender equality is not only the responsibility of women; it is the responsibility of us all.

Throughout his life, he retained his strong concern, not only for the welfare of refugees and migrants, but also for the greater recognition of the important contribution they could make. He showed great foresight in persuading the late Peter Sutherland to become the first Special Representative on Migration. We owe it to him and to his legacy to do everything we can to finalize and implement the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and the global compact on refugees.

Kofi Annan could be heard around the world without raising his voice, but he could also achieve results in private through quiet diplomacy. Perhaps few of us here today, except the representatives of Nigeria and Cameroon, have ever heard of the Bakassi Peninsula. But we might have learned all too much about it had Kofi Annan not devoted years of discreet diplomacy to working with the Presidents of those two countries to prevent it from becoming a cause of war.

We could search the Charter of the United Nations in vain for any article mandating the Secretary-General to bring together private corporations to discuss ways of improving global public health. Yet, there must be many thousands of people alive today who would not be, had Kofi Annan not brought together the heads of the world's major pharmaceutical companies and persuaded them to make anti-retroviral drugs available in poor countries at affordable prices. That was his style. It is true that he disliked confrontation, but it was a deliberately and carefully considered choice.

He was very clear in speaking up for the purposes and principles of the Organization. But he knew that shouting at people or denouncing individual States or leaders by name would achieve very little, except to diminish his ability to influence them. But he never forgot that a lesser evil is still an evil or that the use of force without the right authority is a danger to us all. At a time when we all feel his loss, let me express my special sympathy to his wife, Nane, who was a tower of strength for him throughout his time in office and since; to their children, Kojo, Ama and Nina, who are also with us today; to the staff of the United Nations who worked with him here and around the world, all of whom must feel a little orphaned today; and, lastly, to the people of Ghana, who were so proud of him and laid him to rest so magnificently last week.

The late Kofi Annan loved the Akan proverbs of Ghana. One such proverb states, "We go to a funeral to mourn the living". As we mourn the loss of Mr. Annan, we are reminded of how much work is left to be done to build the legacy of the former Secretary-General. To live up to his example is a formidable challenge for us all but most of all perhaps for the current holder of the office.

It is therefore with great sympathy, as well as respect, that I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: We are deeply honoured and graced by the presence of Mrs. Nane Annan and members of the Annan family.

The United Nations and Kofi Annan were inseparable. It is impossible to say where one ended and the other began. And so we say to the dear Annan family today not only "welcome", but "welcome home". To so many of us, Kofi Annan was more than just a dear friend. He was family. And I know that representatives in the Hall feel the profound sorrow that accompanies the sudden passing of such a beloved leader, mentor and guide.

Kofi Annan was uncommonly warm, accessible and of the people, but above all he was principled and forceful in battling for the values of the Charter of the United Nations. In recent weeks, so many of his former colleagues have fondly recalled a workplace encounter or an unexpected phone call asking after their well-being or that of their family. He had a knack for assembling solid teams and winning their allegiance by giving them room to do their best. He was charming

and wise, kind and courageous, but he also knew how to deliver a barb in his masterly subtle way. "I wonder if that is the best approach", he would muse. Or perhaps he might say, "I would want to be sure". Sometimes, people were so captivated by his presence that they did not realize they were being admonished.

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Kofi Annan — and not only because I very probably would not be here had he not chosen me 13 years ago to become United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. That was probably his worst mistake.

At the funeral service in Accra last week, Kofi Annan was described as a good and faithful servant. He was indeed good at everything he did across a life of true service. He would be the first to describe any achievement as the product of teamwork. But let me mention just two of the many examples where his individual brilliance shone through. His personal advocacy to mobilize a global response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic led to actions that saved millions of lives. His efforts to articulate the Millennium Development Goals rallied the world behind poverty eradication and paved the way for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, today's ambitious blueprint for a better world.

In a world of impunity and buck-passing, his willingness to own up to setbacks was refreshing — yet another remarkable example. And his moral voice led the world towards ground-breaking understandings on the need to defend our common humanity. Throughout his tenure, Kofi Annan urged us never to be bystanders in life. He summoned us all to act against bias, brutality and bloodshed. He was a multilateralist through and through and a true United Nations-blue believer in a rules-based, global order. I must say, his loss cuts even deeper because we have never needed that faith and inspiration more than we do now.

Kofi Annan called the United Nations the "last best hope of humanity". He burned with the flame of human rights, dignity and justice. We shall miss him every day, but we vow here in the heart of his beloved home that we will carry forward his torch, now and forever. In the exercise of my duties, he will always be my main inspiration and deepest reference.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite members to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Madagascar, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Ms. Razafitrimo (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): "It is ignorance, not knowledge, that makes others say that there are many worlds, when we know that there is one: ours". I wanted to begin my statement on behalf of the Group of African States with those words eloquently spoken by the late Kofi Annan, relating to his vision of the need for a collective and non-exclusive approach to international relations, which has contributed, in particular, to remaking and refocusing Africa's relations with the rest of the world, thereby transforming the continent into a key player in the international system today.

That conviction was what drove and guided that visionary and pioneer of a new Africa, in which he deeply believed. Convinced that Africa's prosperity is essential to world stability, Kofi Annan spared no effort in encouraging and promoting development and poverty-reduction programmes. The world, and especially our continent, remember a figure who was firm in his convictions, cultivated and tenacious, given his innate sense of duty, and who unwaveringly committed himself to the pursuit of equity, justice and peace in the world, especially on the continent.

Happy are those who have been able to fulfil their commitments. Together with the entire world, I firmly believe that the late Kofi Annan fits that description, since from the beginning of his exceptional life trajectory, based on the principles of caring for others and living together in peace and among peoples, he demonstrated the desire to help eliminate poverty and restore peace and security in the world. He worked tirelessly to that end by beginning the process of transforming the Organization to improve its operations, which was a precursor in many ways to the reforms that we have decided to undertake under the leadership of Secretary-General António Guterres this year.

Our feelings and memories of gratefulness have brought us together in this Hall to pay him a stirring tribute, but we are also here to say that we want to build on his legacy and continue the work that he began by making the United Nations relevant to all people through our efforts for peace and development, as embodied in the theme of the seventy-third session of the General

Assembly. Although Africa is unable to console itself over this immense loss, it can, however, take pride in the tributes flowing in from all over the world for one of its sons who earned universal respect. The pain that has gripped us is alleviated by the life lessons imparted to us by this serene strength, who passed peacefully. May the soil of Africa for which he worked so hard be light upon him, and may he rest in peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): Sri Lanka has the honour, as Chair for the month of September, to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States, to join others in paying tribute to the late former Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, and to celebrate his life and legacy. Kofi Annan was a visionary leader who worked tirelessly to make the world a better and more humane place, and he remained a strong advocate for the norms, values and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. For many, Kofi Annan embodied the values of the United Nations, an organization to which he devoted most of his life, first joining the United Nations family as an administrative officer at the World Health Organization in Geneva in 1962 and rising up through the system to become the first Secretary-General elected from the ranks of the United Nations staff.

As Secretary-General, Mr. Annan led the charge to revitalize the Organization and bring it into the new millennium. His first plan for reform, entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), presented to Member States in 1997, continues to be pursued with a renewed focus on improving coherence and coordination. During Mr. Annan's tenure in office, he brought new people into the United Nations to foster a fresh outlook of ideas. He promoted a United Nations whose mission it was to promote peace and act as a beacon of tolerance and solidarity through dark and turbulent times. His work encouraged the world to rethink what the United Nations had become and push the boundaries of what it could become in order to respond to contemporary challenges.

"We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000), Mr. Annan's millennium report, was a clarion call for us, as Member States, to commit to an action plan for addressing crucial issues such as ending inequality and poverty, safeguarding the environment and protecting people from conflict. His report provided the basis for the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), adopted at the Millennium Summit under his leadership. The Summit established a new global partnership amongst States to pursue common, time-bound goals and enabled the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals. That has served as the bedrock foundation that we continued to build on to form the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Annan's call to action to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic led to the establishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. He was also the founder of the Global Compact Initiative to bring corporate social responsibility to the forefront of business. The joint awarding of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize to Mr. Annan and the Organization was a clear recognition of his immense commitment and contribution to the work of the United Nations.

Throughout his life, Mr. Annan stood fearlessly as a voice for peace, human rights and dignity, and he articulated the conscience of humanity in often difficult times. Many have paid tribute to his professionalism, humility, warmth and wit. There are those of us who have been privileged to have worked with him in the United Nations family, or come across him during interactions and discussions. We will remember his towering presence, his wisdom and his soft-spoken style of looking for solutions through diplomacy and dialogue, and we recall the dignified and purposeful way he worked towards shaping a better world for all.

Our thoughts and wishes are with his wife, Madam Annan, the members of his family and all those around the world who have been touched by his charisma, tireless work and compassion.

Wednesday this week marked the twelfth anniversary of Mr. Annan's farewell statement to the General Assembly, during which he expressed his gratitude for having served as Secretary-General during a "remarkable decade" and stated,

> "Together we have pushed some big rocks to the top of the mountain, even if others have slipped from our grasp and rolled back. But this mountain with its bracing winds and global views is the best place on earth to be." (*A/61/PV.10, p. 3*)

Today, we honour his efforts and his unwavering belief in the United Nations ability to help forge

solutions for many of our common problems. In paying tribute to Mr. Annan, let us remain steadfast in our global efforts to work together and face challenges together. Mr. Kofi Annan was a peacemaker whose legacy remains. May his memory and the ideals he stood for continue to inspire people around the world so that we may all work together towards a more just, humane and peaceful world for all.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): Today we come together to pay tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations. On behalf of the members of the Group of Eastern European States, I would like to express our deepest condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Mr. Annan, as well as to the Government and the people of Ghana and the wider United Nations community.

We have lost a true advocate of diplomacy and an inspiring leader who worked tirelessly for a more peaceful and prosperous world. He served as a statesman who brought people together and believed that there is no bridge too broken to rebuild. Through challenging times, his deep compassion and solidarity encouraged people to strive for peace and development.

The profound legacy of Mr. Annan will remain a source of inspiration and creativity for exploring possibilities to pursue a better world through joint actions. As a leader of the United Nations, Mr. Annan was dedicated to serving the needs of people and lifting the voices of individual men and women. In his own words, spoken in Basel, Switzerland, in June 2000, "peace must be built from the bottom up, and begins with every one of us". With his renewed vision for global action, Mr. Annan was devoted to exploring wider opportunities across the United Nations system. He pioneered new ground-breaking initiatives, including the Millennium Development Goals and others, aimed at promoting human rights and combating life-threatening diseases. His achievements throughout his life led to numerous awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize, awarded jointly with the United Nations in 2001.

Mr. Kofi Annan leaves a true mark on history. His lasting legacy will motivate future generations to follow in his path to peace and unity. He will be remembered for his wisdom and courage. In this time of grief, our thoughts and sympathy are with his family, colleagues and the people of Ghana.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bahamas, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Ms. Carey (Bahamas): On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I would like to express our deep condolences on the passing of Mr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr. Annan was the first South-Saharan African to hold the position of Secretary-General. He also had the distinction of being the first Secretary-General to come from the Secretariat. He led the United Nations in a period of transition from the post-Cold War era to the world after 11 September 2001. Called to action by the challenges of his time as Secretary-General, Mr. Annan was a man of values and integrity — a pragmatist who worked tirelessly to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. He always underscored the need to revitalize consensus among Member States on key challenges and priorities, and to convert that consensus into collective and sustainable action.

Mr. Annan was defined as a statesman decades before becoming Head of the Secretariat. He knew and understood the multilateral system and strongly defended multilateralism whenever it was called into question. He used his considerable knowledge and vast experience to reform the internal structures and culture of the United Nations with a view to making the Organization more beneficial to Member States, its partners, its staff and the peoples of the world.

The global challenges we faced during his tenure as Secretary-General compelled him to become a more proactive leader. In that regard, his milestone report, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), embraced the idea that development, security and human rights go hand in hand — a notion that is now at the core of our consensus as an international community. Additionally, Mr. Annan will forever be remembered for his defence of humanitarian intervention and his advocacy of United Nations peacekeeping.

Following his retirement from the United Nations, his passion and advocacy for peace, human rights and good governance were further advanced through the Kofi Annan Foundation, which has contributed to the protection and promotion of peace and development

worldwide. The Latin America and Caribbean Group would like to convey to Mr. Annan's family, his United Nations family and to the Government and the people of Ghana our sincere condolences. His legacy will remain with us forever.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Monaco, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Ms. Picco (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): I am speaking on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

It was with great sadness and emotion that we learned of the passing of His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, the seventh Secretary-General, on 18 August. We express our deepest condolences to his widow Nane and his children Ama, Kojo and Nina. With his passing, the entire United Nations is in mourning. In many respects, he epitomized the United Nations, which he served for more than five decades, first at the World Health Organization and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and then at United Nations Headquarters as Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and as Under-Secretary-General, before being elected Secretary-General on 1 January 1997.

A child of Africa and citizen of the world, Kofi Annan has inspired multiple generations of people who identify with his faith in multilateralism and the indispensable and central role of our Organization. A tireless architect of development and peace, he ushered us into the twenty-first century. The Millennium Summit and the Millennium Development Goals, established under his mandate, enabled us to rethink the way we approach development, development assistance and cooperation. Through his reform efforts, Mr. Annan made the United Nations better equipped to meet the challenges of this new century. On our current path, we must build on his spirit to improve our own work and continue to reform the United Nations.

It was also with Mr. Annan that we mourned the international civil servants whose lives were claimed in the Baghdad attack and the mission personnel who lost their lives in the service of the Organization. Mr. Kofi Annan embodies like no other the idea that "Without progress there is no peace and without peace there is no progress."

The 2001 Nobel Peace Prize awarded jointly to the United Nations and Secretary-General Kofi Annan was the culmination of their exemplary dedication during one of the most unstable periods in modern history. Mr. Annan's actions always served the peoples of the world. He knew that the United Nations could play a central role in freeing people from the dehumanizing condition of poverty, in promoting high-quality education for boys and girls alike, in fighting diseases such as HIV/AIDS, in preserving our planet and its resources, and in containing the scourges of war and violence.

It was Kofi Annan's belief that lasting peace is built through political dialogue and reconciliation. In that context, respect for human rights is a constant commitment that requires us to be constantly vigilant. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations Democracy Fund and the United Nations Human Rights Council were all established during Mr. Annan's second term, all with the same vision of strengthening peace, security, human rights, democracy and development. His belief that it is our collective responsibility to protect the peoples of the world, in particular those that are the most vulnerable, has left a lasting mark and commands our respect and admiration. He undertook the endeavour of a lifetime by establishing the Kofi Annan Foundation at the end of his second term, thereby continuing to devote himself to serving the most vulnerable.

He was also recognized by his peers for his work with The Elders, the group of world leaders of which he was Chair starting in 2013 and through which he responded to humanitarian crises, worked towards reconciliation and promoted peaceful solutions to conflict. The strength and calm he always displayed commanded our respect. Our sadness, therefore, is marked with the recognition reserved for those who serve by humility, who are never satisfied with their accomplishments, and who grow with the challenges they take on. We express our gratitude to this man who took full stock of his responsibilities; this wise man who, through his tolerance and finesse, knew how to appease his interlocutors and build their trust so as to better serve the international community. We express our deepest sympathy to his family, friends, members of his Foundation and his country, Ghana.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United States, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): The United States joins fellow members today in commemorating the life and work of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. On behalf of the United States, I express our deepest condolences to his family and the people of his home country, Ghana. As a child of Africa and the first United Nations official to rise through the ranks to the position of Secretary-General, Mr. Annan inspired generations to strive to leave the world a better place than they found it. We fondly recall that Mr. Annan, a true citizen of the world, spent part of his formative years in the United States as a student at Macalester College in Minnesota, where he encountered harsh winters but also warm midwestern hospitality. Upon graduating in 1961, Mr. Annan embarked on a career advocating for peace and human dignity with the United Nations.

It is no exaggeration to say that Kofi Annan personified the United Nations for millions of people around the world. His lifelong service to the United Nations with the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and his two terms as Secretary-General shaped the course of the Organization and left a lasting impact across the fields of development, human rights, and peace and security. Leading the United Nations during a turbulent period, Mr. Annan helped the United Nations evolve to face new challenges, including through the establishment of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Democracy Fund; the creation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and the adoption of the first-ever United Nations counter-terrorism strategy.

Even after leaving his post as Secretary-General, he embodied the mission of the United Nations, continuing to advance peace and reconciliation through his leadership of the Kofi Annan Foundation and as Chair of The Elders.

On a personal note, I had the great fortune to meet Mr. Annan in Stockholm many years ago at a conference on combating intolerance. It was a brief encounter, but one that made a deep and unforgettable impression on me as a relatively junior diplomat. His warmth, his intellect, his profound decency and quiet, shining dignity, as well as his tireless commitment to working for a better world exemplified for me what all diplomats should aspire to be. The themes that Kofi Annan championed — peace and reconciliation, improving the lives of the least fortunate and recognizing the inherent dignity of every person — remain as urgent today as they were during his time with the United Nations. Today we join the entire United Nations in celebrating his remarkable life and recalling his inspiring legacy.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon: I am honoured to stand before the General Assembly for the first time since I left the United Nations to join in paying tribute to our dear friend and leader of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan.

As a lifelong civil servant, as a devoted family man, as the head of the United Nations during a turbulent decade and as my friend, I have always had tremendous respect and admiration for Kofi Annan. And being back here in New York, I am reminded that the entire world shares my admiration. Indeed, the entire international community was continuously astounded by Kofi Annan's razor-sharp intellect, moved by his guiding compassion and encouraged by his driving idealism. This was just as true for world leaders and diplomats in New York and Geneva as it was for everyday people in Kumasi, Ghana and beyond. As one of those who had the honour to know him, I consider myself extremely fortunate to have personal memories of such an inspiring leader, who gave so much to this world and was a genuine force for global good.

I first met Kofi Annan when I served as Chef de Cabinet to the President of the General Assembly in 2001, and more closely when I served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Korea. His support and kindness helped pave the way for the path I took in following him. As his immediate successor as Secretary-General, I relied on his guidance in ensuring a smooth leadership transition for the Organization.

And after I took the reins as Secretary-General, I humbly called on him again. He accepted the impossible task of mediating the deadlocked Syria talks. He helped to prevent violence in Kenya, saving countless lives, and he served as my trusted adviser. After I concluded my tenure as Secretary-General, I was fortunate again to have the chance to work with him as a member of The Elders, where he served as Chair. In fact, I was proud a year ago to work together with Kofi Annan, all of The Elders, and young leaders from around the world. We worked together to honour those building peace in the

face of conflict, division, and despair, a situation Kofi that cared deeply about.

He was a diplomat, but also a very inspirational leader. And he was always thinking of how he could inspire courageous leadership in others, so that they could go on to overcome the suffering and the wrongs in the world. This is what he continued to do right up until the very end of his brilliant life.

I have struggled to put into words just how much Kofi Annan helped me personally and how well he served humankind. His commitment to peace and conflict resolution, sustainable development, human rights and global education resonated powerfully with all those he encountered, including myself. My tribute can never fully express the feelings in my heart, but I am confident that history will show that Kofi Annan was a monumental leader.

He was modest, yet simultaneously commanding. He was a leader who was deeply rooted in his past yet had an illuminating vision for the collective future. He was a leader who has left us bereaved with his passing, but has provided us with a remarkable legacy that will endure forever and continue to inspire. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, whom Kofi Annan succeeded as Chair of The Elders, said that he always saw Kofi Annan as a wiser and younger brother. I saw Kofi Annan as a wonderful older brother who taught me so much. That reminds me of one of his sayings: "You are never to young to lead, and never too old to learn."

To his wife Nane and his children Kojo, Ama, and Nina, I extend my deepest condolences, as well as to His Excellency President Nana Akufo-Addo and the people of Ghana, who can be very proud of their son Kofi Annan. Today in the General Assembly Hall, we stand together in deep mourning and in heartfelt tribute to a great man, who embodied the universal ideas that we all strive to uphold. May he rest in peace for all eternity.

The President: I now invite Ms. Mary Robinson, representative of The Elders, to give a tribute.

Ms. Robinson (The Elders): I am honoured to speak here today in tribute to Kofi Annan, who, as Secretary-General, was first my boss at the United Nations, and later we were Elders together, joined in July 2007 by Nelson Mandela. When I took up the appointment as High Commissioner for Human Rights in September 1997, my staff in Geneva told me the exciting news that Kofi Annan had put through a United Nations reform package in July 1997 that provided for executive committees on peace, security, humanitarian and development issues, and that the Office of High Commissioner was the only office to be a member of all four executive committees.

When I came to the General Assembly later that September and met my new boss again, I asked what he had in mind in having human rights at the table in all four executive committees. With a lovely smile, Kofi said, "That's for you to work out, Mary". During the five years I served in the post, I knew I had a Secretary-General who was committed to linking peace, development and human rights. Yes, there were times of some tensions. The role of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is to speak truth to power and to represent the first three words of the Charter of the United Nations: "We the peoples". The role of Secretary-General is a more complex, diplomatic one of essentially navigating the way forward through advocacy and persuasion.

During that period, Kofi led the United Nations through some of the most difficult times in its history: Rwanda, Srebrenica, the Gulf War and 9/11. It was a time when the Organization's continued relevance was being openly challenged, as the new millennium dawned. That must have been such a huge professional burden, such a formidable task, with tremendous personal pressure. And yet, Kofi steered the United Nations through that period with assured calmness, grace and dignity. He left the Organization with a sense of purpose, a vision and a mission that it had been struggling to define or defend when he arrived. Kofi's determination re-established the United Nations as a body to defend the poor and the vulnerable, to provide support to those suffering injustice and to be the custodian of equality and human rights.

He lifted the United Nations into the twenty-first century and gave it relevance and immediacy in a world facing new challenges of inequality, injustice and, of course, climate change. None of that would have been possible without his courage, his powers of persuasion, and his optimism for the idea that, when we work together, we can achieve great things. Kofi spent his whole life believing change is possible. He witnessed it in Ghana as a teenager when his home country gained independence, and he saw it time and time again in his 44 year career within the United Nations.

He believed passionately in the United Nations and its role in defending and moving human rights forward.

He always referred to the United Nations as a family. He nurtured it like a family. He stood up for it like a proud father. He cared for its well-being and its future as a loving parent would. After his time at the United Nations he established the Kofi Annan Foundation to continue his work, and we joined the Elders together at its founding in 2007. Kofi saw our role as Elders as an extension of his work on the issues closest to his heart: peace, justice and human rights. He became our Chair, in succession to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and he too had a great sense of humour. When I served as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I rang my husband, Nick, from Kinshasa on one occasion at our home on a lake in the west of Ireland. Nick explained that he was trying to sort out a local row. He said, "Think of me as the Special Envoy of the Small Lakes". When I told Kofi this, he burst out laughing, and ever afterwards he would greet Nick as the Special Envoy of the Small Lakes.

Kofi was working tirelessly right up to the end. I had the honour to join him on an Elders visit to Zimbabwe just before the country's recent elections, on what would become his last public engagement. He was not feeling well, but he had a sense of the importance of a peaceful outcome for the people of Zimbabwe. He pushed himself hard and became ill on the flight back to Switzerland. His death shortly afterwards was a great shock to his beloved wife Nane and their family, to his Foundation, to the Elders, to the United Nations system and to the many, many friends and people he influenced around the world.

As we reflect in the Assembly today on his legacy and the millions of lives he touched, I am reminded of something Kofi would often affirm — that there is no peace without development, no development without peace and neither peace nor development without human rights. He believed that this was what the United Nations existed to achieve, and through his quiet power of persuasion and stubborn optimism it is what he has inspired many of us to dedicate our lives to. I, along with the entire world, will forever be indebted to him for that.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Ms. Tasa Delenda, former member of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

Ms. Delenda: I thank the Assembly enormously for giving me the honour to participate in this memorial service for the late Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Let me begin by expressing my heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Annan, Ama, Kojo, Nina, family and dear friends. The loss of Mr. Annan will be felt by many all over the world. On this occasion, I would like to share with the Assembly the Kofi Annan I worked for and the person I came to know, respect and admire throughout the years.

I joined Mr. Annan's team in 1997, when he became Secretary-General. I was one of his two personal assistants. The other was Wagaye Assebe, who worked with him for over 20 years and who would be in this Hall today instead of me had she not passed away. A few years after he left the United Nations, I joined Mr. Annan in Geneva when he was the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States to Syria. In between, we had been regularly in touch. I am both proud and humbled to have been asked to give a tribute on behalf of his staff.

I would have never thought I would be standing at this rostrum addressing the Assembly. Somehow, I have the feeling that Mr. Annan is looking down at me, smiling, knowing that I am out of my comfort zone, yet proud of me that I am here. Mr. Annan knew the strengths and weaknesses of his staff. In a very subtle way, he encouraged all of us to push ourselves and take on responsibilities and tasks that we might have thought were beyond our capabilities, as I am doing today. I would like to share with the Assembly a few examples of Mr. Annan in action at the office.

It was very rare to have a quiet day at the office. Mr. Annan generated work, even on a day off. Then again, he knew how to reduce stress at the office. Once, a Head of State came to meet him, entering the Secretary-General's office via the official door. When the meeting was over, they came out via the staff office's door. We were all surprised and stood up. After the departure of the Head of State, Mr. Annan came back and said, "Did I surprise you by exiting via your door?" It was a nice way to end a hectic day, laughing.

In another example, it is well known that Mr. Annan used to like walking. On trips, if Mrs. Annan was not there, he would walk alone. For once, that was going to change. One evening, I received a message asking me to inform the staff that in the morning we would all accompany him on his walk. When I conveyed the

message to the staff, I had to repeat it a couple of times. At first, they did not believe me. In the morning, as promised, Mr. Annan approached us and asked us if we were ready. We said that we were ready to go and took off. Little did we know that soon after we would regret our compliance. Even though we were walking as fast as we could, he was always ahead of us. We never caught up with him, especially after he started running up the stairs two steps at a time. He never asked us again.

Of all Mr. Annan's positive traits, perhaps the most important was his thoughtfulness. When he asked us, "How are you?" or "How is the family doing?", he always waited to hear the answer, even if he was pressed for time. He remembered details that were important to each one of us personally — a birthday, a son's graduation, a parent's sickness. He treated us all the same, irrespective of rank. Whenever a dignitary would meet with him and he felt that a member of his staff would have some sort of connection — country of origin, religious affiliation or even a language connection — he would make sure to introduce the staff member to the dignitary. When we looked for guidance, he was generous with his time and counsel.

I can sum up my feelings about Mr. Annan by referring to a conversation I had with CBS anchorman Mike Wallace, who accompanied Mr. Annan on his mission to Iraq in 1998. In a quiet moment, Mr. Wallace asked me, "What is it that makes Mr. Annan so special that everyone appreciates his ways?" I enumerated a number of qualities, and then realized that what made Mr. Annan unique was that they were all embodied in one person.

Mr. Annan was also a caring husband, father and grandfather, always remembering the special days. Upon arriving at the office, he would say, "Today is Ama's birthday. Let us call her", or "Today is Kojo's birthday. Let us call him", or "Please send flowers to Mrs. Annan", and proudly he would add, "Today is our wedding anniversary".

We, the United Nations staff, are very thankful for the opportunity to have known Mr. Annan. It was just a privilege to be so close to such a great man. Our dear Secretary-General will be greatly missed, but even though he is gone, his legacy, his belief in a better future and his vision will continue to live in each and every one of us. May he rest in peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Iqbal Riza, former Under-Secretary-General and Chef de Cabinet.

Mr. Riza: It is a great honour to speak here today at the memorial for former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Allow me to speak at a very personal level and from a very personal perspective.

Kofi Annan was literally my first friend at the United Nations, in 1978. He had joined the United Nations in Geneva 16 years earlier and was a consummate United Nations insider. I had spent 20 years in the Foreign Service of Pakistan in bilateral posts. I joined the United Nations at a junior level as a total outsider.

From our first chance meeting, we bonded. I sensed his special qualities: exceptional intelligence and acumen, an innate courteousness, a quiet self-assurance and a slightly impish sense of humour. Later, other attributes emerged: a deep commitment to the goals of the United Nations, a strikingly wide circle of friends outside the United Nations, a dazzling memory and natural charisma. We started meeting after work; he invited us home, where we first met Ama and Kojo as young children.

Then there was a very special memory for me. While he was with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), I stayed with him in Geneva for a few days. He introduced me to a young lawyer at UNHCR of striking intellect, who was also beautiful and charming. A year or so later, Nane Lagergren and Kofi Annan married. As those present know, she is here with us today with her lovely daughter, Nina, although in this most sad of contexts.

For 15 years, our tasks at the United Nations were on entirely separate tracks. Kofi rose rapidly in the Secretariat management structure. I was involved in political missions abroad, first in Iran and Iraq with Mr. Olof Palme and Mr. Jan Eliasson. I was then sent by Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar to head missions in Nicaragua and El Salvador. While I was away, I knew that I could always phone Kofi at Headquarters for wise advice and support.

Our careers then converged. In 1993, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali designated Kofi as head of the new Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and me as deputy head. With us now working together, our friendship strengthened under the pressure of 16-hour days and only 12-hour days at weekends. We

were supported by a remarkably talented young United Nations staff and close reliable teamwork.

I recall vividly our first meetings in 1993 with the Permanent Representatives of the permanent five — Kofi, a young colleague and myself on one side of a long table; on the other side, the five powerful Ambassadors, with their aides behind them. Their questions were justifiably sharp but some were also openly condescending. The fledgling Under-Secretary-General showed no sign of unease, retaining his composed demeanour. A week later, they were more collegial. In the third week, he received not only cordiality but also open respect.

In 1994, the uncertainty of a second term for Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali was no secret, and Kofi began to be considered a possible successor. Then, unexpectedly, in 1995 he was assigned as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the former Yugoslavia, overseeing the transition of the United Nations Protection Force in Zagreb, in the Balkans, where the Bosnia crisis — it is horrible to recall — was in full sway. He returned to DPKO after the Dayton Agreement on Implementing the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in 1996 I succeeded him as Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the reduced United Nations mission, with its headquarters in Sarajevo. During those two years, we remained in telephone contact not only on DPKO matters but also on the politics for the next Secretary-General. The pattern of voting and parallel vetoes in late 1996 are on record. On Friday, 13 December, at around 7 a.m., Kofi phoned me to say that the Permanent Representative concerned had called to inform him that the veto would be lifted. Of course, I congratulated him. His response was that now I would be his Chef de Cabinet — and that was that.

After the formal appointment by the General Assembly, some close friends gave advice to the new Secretary-General. When one of them remarked that he would have to develop a thick skin in United Nations politics, he laughingly retorted that he knew that the initials "SG" also stood for "scapegoat".

With only two weeks for the transition, we moved quickly. The core DPKO team of Elisabeth Lindenmeyer, the late Wagaye Assebe — one of the gentlest people whom I have ever known — Anastasia Delenda, who has just addressed the Assembly, Shashi Tharoor, Fred Eckhard and Lamin Sise all moved to the 38th floor, soon fortified by Edward Mortimer, enticed from *The Financial Times*, and Nader Mousavizadeh, who was later to co-author Kofi's memoir.

From his first days as Secretary-General, Kofi started to blossom in his gruelling role — the most impossible job in the world. He moved swiftly and surely to bring far-reaching changes at the United Nations. A Senior Management Group of all heads of funds and programmes, including those away from New York, was established. No previous Secretary-General had such a coordination system, which, frankly, mystified us. The first Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Fréchette, who is also present in the Hall today, was appointed and assigned substantive portfolios, such as the reform programme and oversight of the oil-for-food programme. Human rights were assigned a special priority, and a special High Commissioner, Mary Robinson, was appointed. The worldwide campaigns for the Millennium Development Goals and against HIV/AIDS were launched. The United Nations opened its doors to new constituencies, such as academia, foundations and even a link with the private sector, and to further innovative and imaginative measures.

My modus operandi was to take as many decisions on the Secretary-General's behalf as I considered prudent so that our most valuable asset — the Secretary-General's time — could be devoted to complex and sensitive political issues. I stayed at Headquarters whenever he was overseas. The pressures were formidable, and the support of my talented Special Assistant, Fatemeh Ziai, proved indispensable.

We all know that Kofi's first term was crowned by the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001, awarded jointly to the United Nations and to Kofi, personally. I still recall his brilliant speech in Oslo, in which he declared that the world had entered the new millennium through a gate of fire.

Towards the end of his first term, I asked him to appoint a new Chef de Cabinet for his second term, as I was tiring and my two sons were cross with me for not finding time for their children. He insisted that I continue, and we agreed on two years and then later a third, for a total of eight.

Kofi's second term was to bring a sea of troubles, which can be only briefly mentioned here. Beyond their global repercussions, they were to bring about dire lethal consequences for the United Nations. And of course, that includes Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia and so on.

The attacks on major cities of our host country on 11 Sept 2001 justifiably drew massive retaliation, under the self-defence provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, validated ex post facto by the Security Council for the coalition that was formed. Afghanistan, already ravaged by the country's warlords and violent extremism, now also suffered huge bombardments, with heavy civilian casualties. The Secretary-General turned to Lakhdar Brahimi, the undisputed maestro of complex political negotiations. Later, he was asked to take on an equally daunting assignment to Iraq — a reflection of Kofi's high esteem for him.

Iraq, too, suffered lethal consequences, which its regime first brought on itself. We know that Saddam Hussein faced accusations of covertly developing nuclear weapons, and intensive investigations by the United Nations were under way. Here, I should like to offer a personal vignette. When satellite photographs were being displayed in the Security Council as evidence of Iraq's secret efforts (see S/PV.4701), I leaned over and whispered to the Secretary-General about the General who was speaking: "The General is not comfortable with what he is saying — he is following orders".

After the massive attack by the coalition forces on Iraq, the Council decided to deploy the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. Sergio Vieira de Mello was a colleague of extraordinary talents, and Kofi assigned him as his Special Representative. The three of us met in the Secretary-General's residence on a Sunday morning, and Sergio accepted the assignment with some reluctance. None of us can forget the calamity that struck the mission on 19 August 2003, killing Sergio and 21 other courageous and dedicated United Nations colleagues. For Kofi, and for all the United Nations, Sergio was a true hero, and he remains a hero to the entire United Nations family.

Here, I should like to recall that after the Security Council virtually decimated the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda when the genocide erupted in 1994, General Roméo Dallaire refused to abandon the people of Rwanda in their blood-soaked nightmare. He was another United Nations hero.

Beyond containing wars and civil conflicts, the Secretary-General, late in his second term, was confronted by a right-wing campaign in the host country on the oil-for-food imbroglio, bringing him into the political line of fire. Accusations and insinuations flew around. Eventually, the inquiry led by Paul Volcker absolved him, but it left him wounded. Yet he prevailed to complete his second term. Such resilience is a rare quality.

I should like to end with some vignettes. One of my first instructions to our close team when Kofi became Secretary-General was that he would be addressed only as "SG" and no longer as "Kofi". Every few months, I would ask him if his hat size had expanded, and he would assure me that it was still the same.

When a crisis became so aggravating that even Kofi's remarkable composure showed signs of stress, I would remind him that in Nane he had a strong anchor in the storms that confronted him. In his second year as Secretary-General, I remarked to Nane that her husband had become a celebrity. She was scandalized and emphatically denied that. But the fact was that he, and a very reluctant Nane, inevitably became world celebrities and were recognized wherever they went. Once on a street in Italy, a passer-by asked for an autograph, saying "please, Mr. Freeman", and Kofi with a flourish signed "Morgan Freeman".

What will be my memories of Kofi Annan? I will remember him as our Secretary-General; a builder of confidence and bridges between antagonists; a crusader to better the lives of the unfortunate and the deprived, above all refugees; a dedicated defender of human rights everywhere; the epitome of soft power, well-deserving of the sobriquet "the secular Pope"; a close friend; a man of innate and naturally deep kindness, generosity of spirit and ever-ready empathy — characteristics that also define his wife, Nane.

Only on the day after his passing did the reality strike me, and involuntarily a verse from schooldays — a verse from Shakespeare — meandered back into my mind, albeit from a markedly different context. It is from the last lines of *Julius Caesar*, when Brutus, in deep remorse for joining in the assassination of Caesar, takes his own life and is eulogized by Antony. I should like to quote it as an epitaph for Kofi Annan.

> "His life was gentle, and the elements
> So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"

This was a man.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I invite Mrs. Nane Annan, wife of the late Secretary-General, to take the floor.

Mrs. Annan: I express my gratitude for the deeply touching welcome for me and my family here at the United Nations, to which Kofi devoted his life. We will cherish this moment, this day of peace, and it will help sustain us as we move forward.

But we are lucky to have so many memories, or rather imprints. He had a glowing aura of radiant warmth and joy of life that one could literally feel and left its impact on people near and far. It was the impact of someone who cared not only for people individually, but about the need for a fairer, more peaceful world for all of us to inhabit. I have received so many messages about how he touched lives and inspired us to accompany him on the road to a greater good. I know that staff members of the United Nations here and around the world are with us today. I would like to thank them for the dedication and commitment they have always shown him and me.

It is a sad occasion that leads me to be standing here, exactly where he stood to put forth his far-reaching proposals. I remember the day he was elected Secretary-General. I was sitting in the Assembly Hall and saw him walk beautifully and gracefully to the rostrum. I remember the Ambassador introduced him as a son of Africa, blown in on the winds of the Sahara.

The office of Secretary-General is based on persuasive powers, and did he ever use his powers of persuasion to the fullest. His whole being was intent on finding solutions to the challenges at hand, thinking outside the box — the rebel on the thirty-eighth floor. And there was no retirement in retirement. How could there be? There was still so much to do and so many challenges to take on. As Mary Robinson stated just now, his last mission was to South Africa to honour Nelson Mandela's 100th birthday, and then to Zimbabwe, as he was concerned about the elections there.

Although an Elder, he had a very special connection to young people. They felt that he was a kindred spirit who spoke to them from his heart, without pretence and with genuine interest. I also know that today, a group of young, courageous leaders are here from the very close-knit programme at the Kofi Annan Foundation, which brings together young people from around the world to tackle the problem of violent extremists. I thank them.

He died too soon, leaving us heartbroken and bereft, but he lived exactly as he wanted — to the fullest, while packing in many lifetimes in those 80 years. His legacy will live on in his Foundation and in all of us.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Kojo Annan, the son of the late Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Mr. Annan: It is an incredible honour for me to stand here in this awe-inspiring Hall, in front of the Assembly, to pay tribute to my father. This is hallowed ground. It is the only place on the planet where the entire world comes together to address humankind's biggest challenges and harness our greatest opportunities. It is hallowed ground because in many ways it is home. The United Nations was home to my father for the better part of 45 years and has always felt like home to me and my family.

What is home, anyway? I have been reflecting on that question a great deal lately. What is home? Who am I? Where am I from? Where am I going? A father's death has the distinct effect of prompting uncomfortable existential questions. I was born in Geneva to a Ghanaian father and a Nigerian mother. I am also a British citizen and I have lived many years of my life in London, Lagos, Accra and New York. My sister Ama is a United States citizen who has lived in New York, Lagos, Paris and London. My stepmother Nane, daddy's beloved wife for the past 35 years, is Swedish. My sister Nina is Swedish and now, recently, Swiss. Nina's lovely kids are Swedish, Dutch and Swiss. Do not ask me how the World Cup works in their house. My wife is a quarter Nigerian, a quarter Ghanaian, a quarter Indian and a quarter English. It is a mini-United Nations.

As a result, I have always thought of myself as a global citizen. But recently, as I reflected on my father's remarkable life, it struck me that being a global citizen has nothing to do with stamps in a passport, addresses lived at or a One World miles balance. It is a responsibility far greater than the trappings of privilege that my father's career afforded me. I finally understand that being a global citizen is about completely embracing the common humanity of all of the world's citizens. It is about seeing potential in anyone and helping to build a world where anything is possible for that someone. It is literally unfathomable that an obscure young man born in Kumasi, Ghana's second city, 19 years before Ghana's independence, and who had never left the country before he was 18, would rise to one day become the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations. Yet, that was my father's story. It is a story that became his world view. If it was possible for him, why should stability peace, security, justice, sustenance, education, opportunity or success be impossible for anyone else?

I finally understand that being a global citizen is about creating a world where everyone can find home. Home is not where one is from or where one lives. Home is being seen and accepted for who one is; being encouraged, comforted fed and clothed; having a roof over one's head; being loved and supported, and being given access to opportunity.

One of my father's favourite quotes came from Edmund Burke: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." It was more than a quote; it was his code. That is why he always felt at home here, surrounded by and working with the dedicated men and women of the United Nations and the Member States that shared that code. To quote Secretary-General António Guterres, "Kofi Annan was the United Nations and the United Nations was Kofi Annan". I thank the Secretary-General for his wonderful words in Accra. We were deeply moved.

My father's race has ended but the work continues. He believed it was the only work worth doing — creating a world where everyone can find home. He fervently believed in this institution and everyone in it. If my father were here, he would implore the Assembly to continue fighting the good fight to beat back the forces of inequality, disease, injustice and strife. He would implore me to do the same. My father's passing has made it absolutely clear that I need to follow in his footsteps, not as Secretary-General or as a politician, but as a humanitarian, doing my little bit wherever I am and however I can for humankind. We can all do our little bit for a fairer, more peaceful world. We can all make peace personal in honour of daddy.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Annan Cato, Special Representative of the President of the Republic of Ghana.

Mr. Cato (Ghana): I deem it a great honour to address this special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly in honour of the late Kofi Atta Annan and to deliver this statement on the authority and on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana.

May I from the onset express Ghana's sincere thanks to the President of the General Assembly and to the Secretary-General for convening this special commemorative meeting. The Government and the people of Ghana deeply appreciate the expressions of sympathy and tributes that have been paid to the memory of our beloved compatriot, Kofi Annan, since his passing on 18 August. We are touched and comforted by the numerous heart-warming sentiments expressed in the statements made in the course of this morning's commemorative meeting.

I wish to thank Secretary-General António Guterres and the staff of the United Nations, both serving and retired, who travelled to Ghana last week to attend the funeral service for Kofi Annan. Their presence in Ghana and that of a large number of current and former Heads of State and Government, royalty, representatives of international bodies and eminent personalities from many countries was testimony to the high esteem and deep respect that the world held for Kofi Annan, a son of Ghana and of Africa, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, global citizen and Statesman.

In his eulogy during the State funeral for Kofi Annan, the President of Ghana, His Excellency Mr. Nana Akufo-Addo, stated that

> "the epithets 'charming, cosmopolitan, consensus-builder, elegant, eloquent, gentle-mannered, modest, polyglot, proud African, peacemaker, quintessential diplomat' are still inadequate to capture the fullness of the personality of Kofi Annan, one of the truly iconic figures of modern times".

As has been stated repeatedly, Kofi Annan always presented a picture of peace and equanimity behind a quiet human frame. His encounters with people around the globe attested to his commitment to what made for the dignity and solidarity of humankind. He devoted his life's work to making peace where there was conflict, to defending the human rights of the vulnerable and voiceless and to promoting socioeconomic advancement for all.

As the first Secretary-General from sub-Saharan Africa, Kofi Annan brought considerable renown to Ghana and to Africa, evidenced by his conduct and comportment in the global arena, especially at difficult periods in the history of the Organization. He represented a leadership that was infused with great diplomatic skill, commitment to the core values and principles of the United Nations Charter, and devotion to the welfare of humankind. As he himself articulated in a BBC interview earlier this year, for him, leadership was not so much about the individual, as about the attributes required to serve the needs of society and people.

Let me conclude this brief statement by reiterating Ghana's appreciation to all Member States for their expressions of sympathy and solidarity with the family represented here by his widow Nane, his children Ama, Kojo and Nina, and with the Government and the people of Ghana at this time of mourning and loss. We are reminded that human existence is punctuated by significant events that provide opportunity for reflection and solidarity.

This commemorative plenary meeting of the General Assembly has been one such significant event. We have remembered and celebrated the life and achievements of Kofi Annan, a global citizen. It is Ghana's hope that the footprints that Kofi Annan has left behind will serve as a guiding light for future generations. No tribute or memorial to Kofi Annan would be more appropriate or more deserved than the reinforcement of our collective commitment to the urgent work of the United Nations in addressing the challenges of today's world. "We the peoples" was Kofi Annan's mantra.

Let us rededicate ourselves to the Charter of the United Nations and to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and effective peacebuilding. Let us recommit to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of all persons. Let us work together to protect our planet and to advance sustainable development, leaving no one behind.

Kofi Annan lived and worked for these ideals. May Kofi Annan's legacy and vision, which cannot be erased, inspire our individual and collective actions in these efforts, and may his soul rest in peace.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

United Nations A/73/PV.3

General Assembly

Official Records

Seventy-third session

3rd plenary meeting
Friday, 21 September 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Tran Dai Quang, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

The President: Before we proceed to the item on our agenda, it is my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, His Excellency Mr. Tran Dai Quang, who passed away earlier today.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the representative of Viet Nam to convey our condolences to the President's family and to the Government and the people of Viet Nam.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Tran Dai Quang, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: A formal tribute in the General Assembly will be convened at a later date to be announced.

I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): We are deeply saddened by the sudden passing away of our President, Tran Dai Quang. It is a great loss for our nation and for the people of Viet Nam, as well as for our friends around the world.

On behalf of the Permanent Mission and the Government of Viet Nam, I would to express our deepest and most sincere gratitude for the sympathy and condolences expressed for our President. Such thoughtfulness and friendships are truly appreciated.

Agenda item 7

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

First report of the General Committee (A/73/250)

The President: May I invite the General Assembly to direct its attention to section I of the report of the Committee. In that section, the General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraph 2.

May I request the General Assembly to now direct its attention to section II, entitled "Organization of the session", which contains a number of recommendations concerning the General Committee, the rationalization of work, the closing date of the session, the schedule of meetings, the general debate, the conduct of the meetings, et cetera.

With regard to paragraph 22, it is proposed that the Fifth Committee complete its work by Friday, 14 December 2018. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that the Fifth Committee will complete its work by Friday, 14 December 2018?

It was so decided.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-29375 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The President: In paragraph 33, the General Committee draws to the attention of the Assembly that the general debate will begin on Tuesday, 25 September, and recommends that it continue on Saturday, 29 September 2018.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the information contained in paragraph 33 and approves the recommendation that the general debate continue on Saturday, 29 September 2018?

It was so decided.

The President: All other recommendations in section II of the report of the Committee concern established practice. Therefore, rather than going through them one by one, I believe it would be beneficial to address all of those organizational matters concerning the General Assembly as a whole. Are there any comments on that approach?

There being none, we shall proceed accordingly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information and to approve all of the recommendations of the General Committee contained in section II of the report?

It was so decided.

The President: Having just adopted the recommendation in paragraph 28 on waiving the requirements of rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly for declaring a meeting open, I should like to encourage delegations to be present in the meeting rooms at the scheduled times in order to promote punctuality and efficiency in the Assembly's proceedings. I should also like to refer to the information contained in paragraph 70 on the timely submission of draft proposals for review of their programme budget implications.

I now invite Members to turn their attention to section III, which deals with the adoption of the agenda. The question of the allocation of items will be dealt with subsequently in section IV.

In section III, the General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 88 to 90. In paragraph 91, in connection with sub-item (k) of item 20 of the draft agenda, entitled "The role of the international community in the prevention of the radiation threat in Central Asia", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading A, "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences".

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 92, in connection with item 30 of the draft agenda, entitled "Space as a driver of sustainable development", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading A.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 93, in connection with item 36 of the draft agenda, entitled "Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading B, "Maintenance of international peace and security".

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 94, in connection with item 42 of the draft agenda, entitled "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading B, on the understanding that there would be no consideration of the item by the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 95, in connection with item 64 of the draft agenda, entitled "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India", the General Committee decided to recommend that consideration of that item be deferred to the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly and that the item be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 96, in connection with item 68 of the draft agenda, entitled "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine", the General Committee decided, by a recorded vote, to recommend its inclusion under heading B.

In accordance with rule 23 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, in the event that there is a debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda when that item has been recommended for inclusion by the General Committee, such debate shall be limited to three speakers in favour of, and three against, the inclusion.

Mr. Musikhin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): During the meeting of the General Committee on 19 September, we expressed our negative view on the inclusion of the item on the so-called temporarily occupied territories in Ukraine on the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. It is lamentable that the Committee, at the request of the Ukrainian delegation, was forced to vote, so as to deviate from the consensus basis for its work. We do not think that a healthy trend.

We would like to inform the General Assembly of our principled opposition to the recommendation of the General Committee, adopted, I remind members, in the absence of consensus, on including this item on the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. We are of the view that this latest Ukrainian escapade, founded on something that Kyiv has devised — an arbitrary interpretation of events — is designed to sow discord within the Assembly and create a negative atmosphere from the very beginning of the new session.

We want to draw the particular attention of States to the fact that this destructive act by the Ukrainian delegation undermines the only internationally recognized format for overcoming the crisis in Ukraine, that is, the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, as approved by Security Council resolution 2202 (2015). That resolution was adopted unanimously owing to the fact that it contains very precise and correct wording that reflects the real situation on the ground. As should be well understood, the expression "the temporarily occupied territories" is not included in that text, and neither is it included in the Council's presidential statement in support of the Minsk agreements, adopted 6 June 2018 (S/PRST/2018/12).

Our delegation, more than any other, wants the conflict on the territory of our near neighbour to be resolved through peaceful means, in complete consistency with the Minsk agreements as approved by the Security Council. Unfortunately, the latest anti-Russian approach of Ukraine within United Nations forums is evidence of the fact that Kyiv's intentions are the opposite, namely, to exacerbate internal conflict as much as possible and hope to secure international assistance in its fight against its own population. The country's authorities are using any opportunity to draw the attention of the international community away from their own role in the hostilities in Donetsk and Luhansk and pretend to be the victim of circumstances, in an attempt to avert responsibility for the situation there.

We are convinced that this item, as proposed for the agenda of the General Assembly, will not help to alleviate the suffering of the populations in Donetsk and Luhansk. Quite the contrary, it will only exacerbate the already lamentable status of the direct dialogue of those regions with Kyiv. If the General Assembly follows the lead of the Ukrainian delegation, it will become Kyiv's accomplice with regard to the non-implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Member States are certainly aware of the dangerous trend and the attempts by some countries to resolve their internal issues through the United Nations, especially in the context of approaching domestic elections. The question is therefore: should the most representative body in the world become involved with the ambitions of those various States?

In conclusion, we believe that the very partisan Ukrainian initiative is designed to create confrontation. We therefore do not agree with the inclusion of this item on the agenda, as proposed by the Ukrainians, or with the recommendation of the General Committee, which was not consensus-based. We request that a vote be taken and encourage all delegations to vote against.

The President: Before proceeding further, I should again like to draw the attention of members to rule 23 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

> "Debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda, when that item has been recommended for inclusion by the General Committee, shall be limited to three speakers in favour of, and three against, the inclusion. The President may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule."

Ms. Argüello González (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua reiterates its congratulations,

support and best wishes for the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

With regard to the topic before us, the only internationally recognized format for resolving the crisis in Ukraine is the Minsk agreements, endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 2202 (2015), in which there is no mention at all of the term, "occupied territory". The inclusion of that topic on the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly is therefore highly politicized and distances us from the consensus achieved. Accordingly, my delegation, through rule 23 of the rules of procedure, supports Russia's proposal and calls for a recorded vote on the inclusion of the topic of the situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine in the agenda, and we call on other Member States to vote against its inclusion.

Mr. Al Arsan (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Madam President, on behalf of my country, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We are proud that you have been elected to that position. You can rely on us to provide the support and cooperation needed to ensure respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

With regard to the request by Ukraine for the inclusion of a additional item on the provisional agenda, circulated in document A/73/193, my country's delegation sees it as a unilateral and politicized step that would undermine our efforts to ensure consensus on the items on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

My delegation has noted for some time that certain delegations request the inclusion of items on the agenda of the General Assembly to exercise political pressure in a manner that undermines the main purposes and principles of the United Nations, thereby using this organ as a means of polarization and spreading discord, instead of making it a source of unanimity and consensus to achieve peace, security and development for all without exception.

Our legal understanding of this issue is based on the clear fact that the situation in those territories is subject to the provisions of the Minsk agreements, which were agreed upon by the United Nations through Security Council resolution 2202 (2015), with all its annexes. The agreements were also supported by the Council's presidential statement S/PRST/2018/12.

Given that legal basis, my delegation believes that the implementation of the Minsk agreements and Security Council resolution 2202 (2015) requires genuine political will on the part of all parties to work together towards restoring security and stability in Ukraine and the region. We therefore view the request for inclusion submitted by the Permanent Mission of Ukraine as a deplorable attempt to obstruct the implementation of those agreements and undermine international efforts to settle the conflict.

Inserting a term like the "temporarily occupied territories" will not change the fact that the issue falls under the purview of the Security Council pursuant to its resolution 2202 (2015), and that it requires the implementation of paragraph 1 of Article 12 of the Charter, which states:

> "While the Security Council is exercising in respect of any dispute or situation the functions assigned to it in the present Charter, the General Assembly shall not make any recommendation with regard to that dispute or situation unless the Security Council so requests."

In conclusion, my country's delegation calls on Member States to vote against the inclusion of the supplementary item before us on the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly. Voting against would reflect our respect for the Charter and international treaties, as well as our commitment to the rules of procedure. It would also demonstrate that we are keen to prevent the General Assembly from becoming involved in politicized issues, especially if such involvement does not serve to settle disputes or achieve security and stability in that part of the world.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): As this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor during a plenary meeting of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Madam President, on your election. Let me assure you of our full support for the able manner in which you have already begun to conduct the work of the Assembly.

Concerning the substance of the issue of the current debate, I would like to state the following. As you already informed representatives, Madam President, the General Committee, at its first meeting, under your wise chairmanship and guidance, recommended to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of the seventy-third session of a new item entitled "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of

Ukraine". I would like to highlight that the Committee's decision was adopted by a recorded vote, the result of which became self-explanatory. An absolute minority — only two Member States — voted against it, thereby attempting to impede the General Assembly's special authority and particular responsibility to consider any issue brought to it by a United Nations Member. The statement delivered by the Russian representative that we just heard provides ample testimony of Russia's total disrespect and disregard — I would say — for the decision already taken by the General Committee. I am convinced — as has been stated by the United Nations membership on numerous occasions — that, as the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the Organization, the General Assembly is imbued by the Charter of the United Nations with the authority to discuss any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Everyone is well aware that, following the military aggression in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol in Ukraine in 2014, the General Assembly, by its resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine", affirmed its commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. I would also draw the attention of the Russian representative to the fact that, since then, in two subsequent resolutions — in 2016 (resolution 71/205) and 2017 (resolution 72/190) — the General Assembly condemned the ongoing temporary occupation of parts of the territory of Ukraine — a fact that the Russian representative carefully avoided in his earlier statement.

What I want to underline is that the foreign occupation in Ukraine, which persists to this day, is not a new topic for the General Assembly, as some Member States would manipulatively try to convince the international community to believe. At the same time, as of today, the General Assembly does not have on its agenda an item under which it would consider the situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine comprehensively or in all its complexity, encompassing the political, security, humanitarian, social, human rights, gender and other dimensions. Introducing a new agenda item is by and large a procedural step aimed at creating a framework and streamlining the consideration of the issue of foreign occupation in Ukraine in the General Assembly in all its aspects.

Having on its agenda a really pressing issue, unlike many static ones that are already there, will serve the purpose of revitalizing the Assembly. The consideration of this international conflict by the General Assembly will have a positive impact on the search for peace, as it will present a unique opportunity for the whole international community, along with dedicated stakeholders, to strengthen existing peace initiatives. It will also make it possible to maintain constant awareness of the conflict on the part of the entire United Nations membership. Close attention to this issue, with consideration by the General Assembly, has to be consistently maintained until the territorial integrity of Ukraine is fully restored within its internationally recognized borders.

In conclusion, since the issue of the implementation of the Minsk agreements was raised by the Russian Federation, I would like to reiterate that Ukraine remains committed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. It is necessary to underline, nevertheless, that the logic of the Minsk agreements envisages the immediate implementation of the initial security provisions, namely, a ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons, which the occupying Power has not done. Foreign troops are still on the territory of Donbas in Ukraine. The occupying Power remains unwilling to stop fuelling the conflict, considering escalation in Donbas as an important element of its overall effort to destabilize Ukraine.

I call upon all Member States to support the inclusion of the supplementary item on the situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine on the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, and accordingly to vote yes. Members' support will become a valuable contribution to the peaceful settlement of the conflict in the very heart of Europe and to putting an end to the suffering of the people of Ukraine.

Mr. Moraru (Republic of Moldova): As this is the first time I take the floor since your election to the presidency of the General Assembly, I should like to extend to you, Madam President, the heartfelt congratulations of the Moldovan delegation.

My delegation supports the inclusion on the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly of a new item entitled "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine". The issue of whether to include this item on the agenda has already

been considered by the General Committee. That Committee took a very clear decision to recommend its inclusion on the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly.

Today we are witnessing a situation where some delegations are attempting to force a position on the General Assembly, a position that did not enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of the General Committee. It is the General Assembly's direct responsibility to respect the rights of all Member States to put forward matters of fundamental concern for transparent deliberation by the Assembly in plenary meeting. It is indeed a matter of high principle for the General Assembly to continue to uphold the rights of its members under the Charter of the United Nations.

In view of what I have just said, my delegation calls on all Member States to vote in favour of the inclusion of the item "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine" on the agenda of the General Assembly, as recommended by the General Committee.

Ms. Bird (Australia): As this is the first time that I take the floor, Madam President, let me add my congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly and pledge my delegation's full support to you in your important role.

Australia supports the proposal to include the supplementary item "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine" on the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. The issues identified in the explanatory memorandum accompanying the request go to the core of the purposes, principles and mandate of the United Nations and its Charter. Indeed, a number of General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 68/262, have called on States, international organizations and specialized agencies to take action with respect to some of the issues pertinent to the situation in Ukraine.

In the four and a half years since the Assembly adopted resolution 68/262, fighting in Ukraine has killed over 10,000 people, including thousands of civilians, and wounded many more. Fighting continues to endanger civilians in eastern Ukraine and to destabilize the wider region. The conflict has already displaced at least 1.6 million people, placing a colossal burden on both Ukraine and its neighbours.

In Australia's view, it is critical that these matters be considered by the General Assembly, the organ with universal membership and a comprehensive mandate, in a holistic fashion. We therefore urge the members of the General Assembly to vote in favour of the inclusion of this item on the Assembly's agenda for the seventy-third session.

The President: The Assembly shall now consider the question of the inclusion of the item in question in the agenda of the current session.

A recorded vote was requested on the recommendation by the General Committee to include item 68 of the draft agenda, entitled "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Before giving the floor for explanations of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): At the outset, let me join other delegations in congratulating you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency of this body. Allow me to assure you of Poland's full trust in your able stewardship of the work of the General Assembly.

Poland will vote in favour of the proposal by Ukraine to include the item entitled "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine" on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. By that vote, we want to reaffirm our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and its territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We want to defend the very basic principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. And we also wish to further enhance the right of Ukraine to have the issue of foreign aggression against its territory discussed in the most representative United Nations organ, namely, the General Assembly.

The illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, which is a clear violation of international law, remains a direct challenge to international security and the stability of the region. We therefore support every international effort to resolve the issue and restore the shattered order.

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): I would like to join my colleagues in congratulating you, Madam President, on your assumption of the position of President of the General Assembly. I would like to assure you of Latvia's full support in your endeavours.

I have the honour to speak now on behalf of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. We reaffirm our strong support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders. This issue must remain high on the international agenda.

We will remain vocal and firm in our irreversible policy not to recognize the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. We consider it a continuing, serious breach of the international order. We are also deeply concerned about human rights violations and abuses in Crimea, which should be thoroughly investigated. International human rights observers must be granted full, free and unhindered access to the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea.

We reiterate that the full implementation of the Minsk agreements remains our unchanged benchmark. We also reaffirm our full support for the endeavours of the Normandy format, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Trilateral Contact Group aimed at a sustainable and peaceful resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

The General Committee, by its vote on 19 September, decided to recommend the inclusion of the item entitled "Situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine" on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania will vote in favour of the inclusion of this agenda item, and we call on other Member States to do likewise.

Mr. Petersen (Denmark): Let me join others in welcoming you, Madam, as President of the new General Assembly session and assuring you of the Danish delegation's full support.

Denmark stresses the continued importance of resolution 68/262, on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and fully supports the proposal to include the item entitled "Situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine" on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

More than four years ago, Russia set aside fundamental principles of international co-existence in its actions in Ukraine. The attempt to hinder the Ukrainian people's free choice and their wish to shape their own future remains unacceptable and poses a challenge to regional and international peace. The aggression against Ukraine and the ongoing occupation of parts of its territory remain deeply unacceptable. The suffering of people in Ukraine persists, and the continued increase in the number of casualties remains of great concern. The human rights situation in the temporarily occupied territories has deteriorated as violations and abuses of human rights continue to take place.

The attention given by the General Assembly to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine is not only important for the people of Ukraine but also is critical for the international community. We must protect and maintain international law, and we must therefore continue to discuss issues of the violations of international law, if we wish to maintain international peace and security.

Denmark recalls its unwavering support for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, and we continue to condemn the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea.

Ms. Agladze (Georgia): I join others in congratulating you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the General Assembly, and I assure you of our full support.

With regard to the inclusion on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session of the new item entitled "Situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine", I wish to highlight the following.

At its meeting held on 19 September, the General Committee took a very clear decision, by an overwhelming majority, to include the item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. It is the General Assembly's well-established custom to respect the right of all Member States to introduce issues of concern for deliberation in plenary meeting.

The occupation of Ukrainian territories is an important issue with grave implications for regional and international peace and must be discussed by the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. Today, however, we face an attempt to impose upon the General Assembly a position that was not supported by the General Committee, which undermines the credibility of the General Committee.

In view of that we strongly support the inclusion of the agenda item entitled "Situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine", and we urge all

delegations to vote in favour of the inclusion of the item as recommended by the General Committee in paragraph 96 of its report.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to join other delegations in congratulating you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly and to assure you of my delegation's full support.

The General Assembly is the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. Member States have the right to submit for discussion in the Assembly any questions within its competence in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

In that connection, the delegation of Azerbaijan will vote in favour of the inclusion of the item in question on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

Mr. Mamdouhi (Islamic Republic of Iran): As this is the first time I take the floor at this session, let me join others in congratulating you, Madam President, on your assumption of the Office of the President of General Assembly. I look forward to you bringing Ecuadorian wisdom to our debates. My delegation would like to assure you of its full support and wish you every success as you take on the task of presiding over our deliberations.

I take the floor to explain our position on the General Committee's recommendation that the General Assembly include on its agenda for the current session the item entitled "Situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine". We are of the view that, at this session of the General Assembly, debating on multifaceted issues of a highly political, controversial nature will have little — if any — utility in furthering efforts to achieve workable solutions to an issue that has already been agreed upon in the Minsk agreements of 2015, which were endorsed in Security Council resolution 2202 (2015).

While there is an agreed international mechanism in place that is supported by the Security Council, inserting this dispute into the agenda of General Assembly might just bring out existing differences and sow division among Member States, rather than bridging them. It could even undermine the internationally recognized, agreed framework for a settlement in Ukraine. We need to afford more time to the already agreed mechanism and wisely refrain from taking hasty decisions.

Iran's principled position is to support a peaceful resolution to the Ukrainian and Russian dispute, and we firmly believe that the issue is primarily related to the two States concerned. A solution reached outside of that framework will not work unless it is endorsed by both States. This prestigious, representative organ should not prematurely engage in a debate on an item that has been on the agenda of the Security Council.

The Islamic Republic of Iran does not support the inclusion of a supplementary item entitled "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine" on the agenda of the current session. We think that it carries adverse implications for the internationally agreed modality and format of reaching a settlement of the dispute — the Minsk agreements — as endorsed by Security Council resolution 2202 (2015).

Mr. Simonoff (United States of America): The United States fully supports the addition of the agenda item entitled "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine". The position of the United States on Ukraine is consistent and clear. We condemn Russia's ongoing occupation of Crimea and call on Russia to release the approximately 70 Ukrainian political prisoners it holds, including Oleg Sentsov, who remains on hunger strike and whose health is deteriorating. We also condemn Russia's ongoing aggression in eastern Ukraine. Russia exerts direct control over anti-Government forces in eastern Ukraine and has introduced thousands of pieces of heavy military equipment into the conflict zone. We remain committed to the resolution of the conflict and call on Russia to fully implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including through the withdrawal of all foreign-armed formations from the territory of Ukraine. We urge all Member States to vote in favour of adding the item to the General Assembly's agenda.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I join others in congratulating you, Madam President, on taking up office.

The United Kingdom resolutely supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders. We reiterate that we do not recognize and continue to condemn the Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea and its control of the peninsula, which remains unlawful. The United Kingdom calls for full compliance with international

human rights standards on the Crimean peninsula. All allegations and cases alleging human rights violations and abuses, such as enforced disappearances, torture and killings, should be thoroughly investigated. International human rights observers must be granted unhindered access to the whole territory of Ukraine, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions.

It is unacceptable that thousands of Crimeans remain outside of the monitoring mechanisms of the United Nations. Resolution 72/190, of 19 December 2017, should be fully implemented without further delay. The United Kingdom reaffirms its full support for the Normandy format, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Trilateral Contact Group, which are working towards a sustainable and peaceful resolution of the conflict through the full implementation of the Minsk agreements by all sides.

The situation in Ukraine is of international concern, so it is right that it should be on the agenda of the General Assembly, a view that the General Committee has overwhelming supported. It is for all those reasons that the United Kingdom will vote in favour of the Ukrainian proposal to include the item on the situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine on the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly and urges all others to do so.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the recommendation contained in paragraph 96 of the report contained in document A/73/250.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour

Albania, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

Against

Armenia, Belarus, Burundi, Cuba, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Abstaining

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, India, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen.

The recommendation contained in paragraph 96 of the report contained in document A/73/250 was adopted by 68 votes to 13, with 48 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote against.]

The President: I shall now give the floor to those members who wish to make statements following the voting. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Bogyay (Hungary): First of all, Hungary would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your election and is committed to supporting your work.

I wish to start by emphasizing that Hungary has always supported the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, and I would like to reinforce that message today. However, allow me to take this opportunity to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the alarming plight of national minorities in Ukraine. Ukraine has adopted an education law that is contrary to the very values of the European Union (EU) and NATO, which Ukraine wishes to join. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the violation of acquired minority rights and call on Ukraine to respect and protect the rights of national minorities. Ukraine has committed to complying with those norms in the

final declaration of the EU-Ukraine summit on 9 July. We expect the country to live up to its commitments.

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): Let me join others in congratulating you, Madam President, on your election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-third session and to assure you of my delegation's full support in the Assembly's work and deliberations.

We have asked for the floor to explain why we voted against the recommendation contained in paragraph 96 of the report contained in document A/73/250. We are of the view that an enduring solution to the situation in conflict-affected areas of Ukraine can be achieved between the parties concerned through negotiations within the established formats and the implementation of mutually agreed arrangements. Armenia remains convinced that there is no alternative to an exclusively peaceful settlement. Our delegation would therefore like to highlight the importance of making every effort to avoid the diversion of processes and of taking consistent measures that are conducive to conflict resolution.

Mr. Situmorang (Indonesia): In principle, we strongly believe that any proposal for the inclusion of an additional agenda item should always be considered on the basis of comprehensive consideration and conducted through an inclusive dialogue among States Members of the United Nations.

My delegation considers that there is a need to continue discussing and clarifying the direction of this new additional agenda item to be included on the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. Such clarification will be important in order to ensure that this additional agenda item will create an atmosphere conducive to further positive dialogue among the parties concerned with a view to finding a durable solution to the situation in Ukraine, as reflected elsewhere in resolution 68/262.

My delegation would like to reiterate Indonesia's firm commitment to the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity, as mandated by our Constitution. Our full support for the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, as clearly stated in resolution 68/262, is a clear application of this mandate.

In conclusion, as the United Nations has so many agenda items for deliberation in the General Assembly, we caution against the proliferation of additional agenda items without careful consultation with the entire membership. Based on all of those considerations, we voted in favour.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as President of the General Assembly at the current session. We assure you of our full support throughout your work.

We must say that the two States concerned — Russia and Ukraine — are both States friendly to the Sudan, with close and even historical links to it. It may be important to mention that, over the past five years, we have maintained permanent diplomatic contacts with Kyiv for the first time — a relationship that is constantly developing.

We voted against the proposal because there are still other possibilities that have not yet been fully explored in the quest for a political solution to the disagreement between the two States.

We wish to recall the Minsk agreements, the application of which the General Assembly should encourage and even increase pressure to that end, so as to ensure the normalization of positive relations between those two neighbouring States. The polarization we have witnessed today can only prevent the General Assembly from fulfilling its obligations under its mandate, pursuant to paragraph 33 of the rules of the Assembly.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): We join others in congratulating you, Madam, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

We listened carefully to the arguments presented — including in the General Committee — on the request for the inclusion of the additional agenda item entitled "Situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine" on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We note that this recommendation of the General Committee did not enjoy consensus. Regrettably, there appears to be an emerging trend for the General Committee to make decisions through a vote. That dynamic has also affected the recommendations of the General Committee when presented to the General Assembly.

Prior to the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, we note that the General Committee adopted decisions mostly by consensus. That practice served us

well. We regret that consensus proved elusive on this particular agenda item and express our hope that the General Committee under your leadership, Madam President, will be able to renew efforts to forge consensus even on difficult issues.

Singapore abstained in the voting concerning the inclusion of this agenda item as set out in document A/73/193. While we respect the right of delegations to request the inclusion of agenda items, there are existing platforms, committees and agenda items in the United Nations for discussion, and even action, on the issues highlighted in document A/73/193.

Finally, we would like to place on record that our vote today on the inclusion of this agenda item does not in any way derogate or alter our position on resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine". We categorically oppose the annexation of any country or territory, as that contravenes international law. We reaffirm the principles of respect for the territorial integrity of, and non-interference in the domestic affairs of, a sovereign nation and respect for sovereignty and the rule of law.

Mr. Oña Garcés (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, like other delegations, we wish to congratulate you, Madam, upon your assumption of the Office of President of the General Assembly. We would like to take this opportunity to wish you the very best in carrying out your important work and assure you of our full support throughout the session.

Traditionally, Ecuador has maintained its position that the General Assembly should welcome the discussion of any matter, regardless of whether we agree with its substance or whether it divides opinion, without prejudice to the analysis we make at the time regarding the fundamental issues to be considered in each venue.

The General Assembly is the highest multilateral forum in which Member States can consider and discuss international problems in a constructive transparent fashion. It is precisely for that reason that Ecuador voted for the inclusion of this topic on the agenda of the General Assembly at this session.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

We will now turn to paragraph 97 of the report, in connection with item 90 of the draft agenda, entitled "Request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the consequences of legal obligations of States under different sources of international law with respect to immunities of Heads of State and Government and other senior officials". The General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading F, "Promotion of justice and international law".

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 98, in connection with item 91 of the draft agenda, entitled "Protection of persons in the event of disasters", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading F.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 99, in connection with item 92 of the draft agenda, entitled "Strengthening and promoting the international treaty framework", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading F.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 100, in connection with item 93 of the draft agenda, entitled "Safeguarding ocean space for present and future generations", the General Committee was informed that the delegation of Malta had requested that the proposal for the inclusion of the item be deferred to a future session of the General Assembly and that no action was required by the General Committee during the current session. The item therefore no longer appears under heading F.

In paragraph 101, in connection with sub-item (c) of item 101 of the draft agenda, entitled "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading G, "Disarmament".

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 102, in connection with sub-item (mm) of item 103 of the draft agenda, entitled "Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World", and sub-item (oo) of item 103 of the draft agenda, entitled "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons", the General Committee decided to recommend their inclusion under heading G.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 103, in connection with sub-item (y) of agenda item 130 of the draft agenda, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)", and sub-item (z) of item 130 of the draft agenda, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea", the General Committee decided to recommend their inclusion under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters".

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 104, in connection with agenda item 135 of the draft agenda, entitled "Impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 105, in connection with agenda item 170 of the draft agenda, entitled "The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity", the General Committee decided, by a recorded vote, to recommend its inclusion under heading I.

Before proceeding further, I should like to draw the attention of members to rule 23 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

> "Debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda, when that item has been recommended for inclusion by the General Committee, shall be limited to three speakers in favour of, and three against, the inclusion. The President may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule."

Mr. Musikhin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The position of the Russian Federation on the concept of the responsibility to protect is well known. We will not repeat it now. But, before we proceed to a vote on this issue, we think it essential to take a brief look at history.

We recall that the member countries of the group promoting the concept initiated this very item last year. It is on record that those countries assured all delegations that, in the words of the Australian representative,

> "the proposal before the Assembly concerns a debate in the seventy-second session only." (*A/72/PV.2, p. 6*).

Other participants in that same group are now putting forward that controversial initiative once again.

I wish to recall that, before the proposal on the responsibility to protect emerged, the General Committee had endeavoured to work on the basis of consensus when agreeing on the agenda of the General Assembly. That is extremely important in order to ensure the effectiveness of its work. Without unity, we cannot achieve the desired result.

Two days ago, on 19 September, when considering the proposal on adding the item on the responsibility to protect in the General Committee, the group of countries that advocated that concept forced a vote using the delegation of Ukraine. In doing so they undermined the consensus foundation of the work of the Committee and, consequently, its authority. This is evidence that the advocates of that concept are not simply making promises that no one will actually keep, they are also instrumentalizing a situation designed to confuse other delegations. Furthermore, they have taken a course to break the practice of the work of the Committee, which has stood for many years. We believe that such a strategy by the advocates of the concept of the responsibility to protect will lead us into an impasse. Tactical manipulation undermines trust and damages the concept itself, which has already been deprived of its consensus basis, which had been constructed in such painstaking fashion since 2005. We should mention that the responsibility to protect was never a standard or a rule, but at least earlier there was an understanding

with regard to its consensual foundations. Now we do not even have that.

In June there was a discussion in the General Assembly on the essence of this issue, but it did not provide any added value. The situation can be corrected only by returning to the format of informal interactive dialogue in order to turn once again to a painstaking search for common approaches to the concept. We think that such a format would be sufficient and appropriate, and we see no reason for reviewing or duplicating it.

For a number of years, a range of delegations have mentioned the serious flaws in the concept and the lamentable consequences of its application. Nonetheless, the analysis of those shortcomings in the outcome of the debate in June has not taken place. There is no reason to hope that the latest formalization of the discussion in the General Assembly will somehow change those approaches.

In the light of what I have just presented, our delegation asks that we proceed to a vote and will vote against the inclusion of the item on the responsibility to protect on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We ask other delegations to do the same.

Mr. Al Arsan (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to express its concerns regarding this attempt by some delegations to have this item, which has become known as the responsibility to protect, included in the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. The countries that submitted that request still insist, in a selective and non-transparent manner, on ignoring the real and deep differences among Member States regarding the interpretation of the concept of the responsibility to protect, in particular its third pillar. Everyone in this Hall, including the Secretariat, is aware of the fact that we still have not established real standards and limitations that prevent the abuse of this concept by the Governments of certain Member States.

We are not delivering today a political statement, or giving lessons to anyone. Rather, we are talking clearly about disastrous consequences and about war crimes committed by the Governments of certain States, as a result of their distortions of the principles of international law and their misuse of the concept of the responsibility to protect unilaterally and without an international mandate. Those Governments have repeatedly committed acts of military aggression against certain countries and occupied territories and have infringed on their sovereignty and independence, as well as interfered in their internal affairs under the pretext of applying the concept of the responsibility to protect.

We will not despair, and we will continue to recall in the Assembly that the former Secretary-General openly mentioned, in one of his reports regarding the responsibility to protect, the genuine concerns related to the abuse by certain Governments of the responsibility to protect in Libya. I recall that Libya had experienced no terrorism from Al-Qaida or Da'esh before the Western military aggression against it. Its citizens were not drowning by the hundreds in the Mediterranean Sea, seeking to escape a war waged against them under the pretext of providing them with protection.

None of the Member States can deny that it is the ultimate responsibility of States to protect their citizens and strengthen early-warning systems to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. However, today we are facing a political and moral crisis that has worsened in recent years. Certain Governments are usurping noble and humane objectives to justify military aggression, occupation and interference in the affairs of other States. Those Governments preach openly at the rostrums of the United Nations that national sovereignty does not prevent them from exercising all kinds of intervention in the affairs of other States, including military intervention, under the pretext of protecting civilians.

We wish to recall that those Governments themselves were for decades responsible for the inability of the United Nations to assume its responsibilities to protect the Palestinian people and the Syrian people in the occupied Golan from Israeli occupation. Those Governments themselves are protecting the military aggression today against the people of Yemen, who are enduring the worst disaster, as mentioned by Under-Secretary-General Lowcock. Those Governments themselves hinder the implementation of relevant Security Council counter-terrorism resolutions in my country, Syria. The issue for those Governments has nothing to do with the responsibility to protect or the need to protect civilians, rather, the issue has everything to do with double standards and political hypocrisy intended to protect specific and narrow interests.

From the legal point of view, we underscore once again that the Outcome Document adopted by the Heads

of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit does not constitute a legal basis for the concept of the responsibility to protect to be considered an established and accepted principle. My country, along with many Member States, believes that paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome did not adopt the responsibility to protect as a principle. Rather, they asserted basic and genuine principles of the Charter of the United Nations relating to the commitment of all Member States to maintain international peace and security, protect succeeding generations from the scourge of war, have faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity of the human person, promote social progress on an equal footing and better standards of life in larger freedom, and, above all, respect the sovereignty of States and non-intervention in their domestic affairs. We therefore view those States that have requested the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its current session as responsible for deepening the dispute and causing divisions among Members of this international Organization.

In conclusion, the Syrian Arab Republic underlines the need to continue discussing this issue as part of informal dialogue sessions. We also reject the idea to include it in the agenda of the Assembly or to include any supplementary item related to it until we have achieved consensus on the concept of the responsibility to protect, its content and limitations. That concept must not be used for political ends that go against the purposes and principles of the United Nations and its Charter.

We call on our colleagues to vote against the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We call on them to support continued discussion of this topic in informal interactive dialogue sessions. Together we all bear a historic, legal and moral responsibility to establish genuine and balanced standards that ensure the application of the Charter with no double standards, selectivity or politicization.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The principle of non-interference is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as we all know, and has been reaffirmed in many documents that prohibit interference in the affairs of States, including early General Assembly resolutions, in particular resolution 2131 (XX), of 1965, entitled "Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of Their Independence and Sovereignty". Therefore, we do not agree with the approach used in selectively citing resolution 60/1, of 2005 while ignoring the Charter and other resolutions and declarations.

It is important for States and the international community to join forces in order to address the root causes of domestic conflicts and internal disputes in particular. The required engagement, or the good engagement, if we can call it that, means providing support in order to meet the needs and address political shortcomings encountered, such as providing help to establish democracy, promote capacity-building and strengthen confidence among the various communities and groups, as well as addressing economic deprivation and lack of economic opportunities.

Over the past three decades, the urgent need to combat the causes of environmental degradation, which is a direct driver of domestic conflicts, has become clear. That degredation poses a real threat to Earth that transcends international peace and security, and becomes a threat to the very survival of humankind on our planet. To address that situation, it is important to provide development assistance and cooperation so as to address inequality in the distribution of resources and opportunities; stimulate economic growth and economic opportunities; improve the terms of trade; give more opportunities to the economies of developing countries to enter export markets; promote the needed structural economic reform; and provide technical assistance in order to strengthen organizational institutions.

We recall that the Charter of the United Nations enshrined the responsibility of each Member State to safeguard international peace and security. When it comes to conflict, Chapters VI and VII of the Charter explain in detail the various ways of upholding international peace and security. Even if peaceful efforts towards reconciliation fail, the Security Council must shoulder its responsibility under Chapter VII of the Charter. Hence, the concept of the responsibility to protect overlaps with the clear provisions of Chapter VII. We all see that the concept of the responsibility to protect is rather a response to a temporary geopolitical situation and changes in accordance with differing circumstances.

One aspect that is permanent and does not change is the principle of collective security, even though it is at times affected by political considerations, but it enjoys greater stability and sustainability with

respect to international peace. It cannot, however, be replaced by the concept of the responsibility to protect. Unfortunately, as we mentioned yesterday in the General Committee, this concept depends on the feasibility of protection. It completely excludes international conflicts and confines itself to domestic ones, which are generally prevalent in Africa, and particularly in developing countries.

Unfortunately, I find myself forced to say that the responsibility to protect is a concept that, in the best of cases, is an opportunistic one. For our country and others in similar situations, this concept represents a threat to our territorial integrity. It encourages using weapons and committing violations. For those reasons, the Sudan will vote against the inclusion of this item. We call on other delegations to do likewise for all the reasons I have just explained.

Mr. Petersen (Denmark): This morning, in this solemn and honourable setting, we commemorated the late Kofi Annan and paid tribute to his service to the international community. In a way, therefore, it seems fitting that the General Assembly should meet this afternoon to adopt, I hope, the inclusion on its agenda of the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Few world leaders have been as dedicated to the prevention of those horrible crimes as Mr. Annan. He personally urged Member States to find common ground in upholding the principles of the Charter and standing up for the protection of civilians. Among the answers to his calls were the consensus adoption by all Member States of the 2005 World Summit Outcome under his stewardship as Secretary-General.

The request made by Afghanistan, Guatemala, Japan, the Netherlands, Romania, Rwanda, Ukraine, Uruguay and my own country, Denmark, to include this item on the agenda of the General Assembly at this session is based on two main arguments: first, to support the principle of respect for the responsibility to protect as agreed by consensus in 2005, and the importance of preventing the most serious crimes against humanity. The request makes specific reference to the consensus 2005 World Summit Outcome as the fundamental basis for the debate. In 2005, in that document, all Member States stressed

> "the need for the General Assembly to continue consideration of the responsibility to protect" (*resolution 60/1, para. 139*).

Secondly, in what we view as a very successful debate on this topic during the session that has just come to a close, 79 Member States from all regions made statements on behalf of 113 countries providing an overview of the range of actions, initiatives and steps that Member States have taken to prevent the most serious crimes. It was clear from that debate that Member States are willing and eager to debate openly and honestly, to share their experiences and challenges, to voice criticism and to ask questions. The great diversity of interventions confirmed the value of holding a formal debate.

During those debates, a significant number of Member States from all regions called for the inclusion of the responsibility to protect as a standing item on the formal agenda of the General Assembly. Not all Member States agreed, and we have listened carefully to the arguments of those opposing this agenda item. We also met with delegations ahead of this meeting to seek consensus on a way forward. We respect the arguments and those who make them. We believe that the arguments should be properly discussed, but wonder why we should not do that openly, transparently, on the record, with interpretation here in the General Assembly Hall. We note that there exist many agenda items where there is no consensus on the substance of the item, but lack of consensus on the substance does not prevent the General Assembly from debating them.

The request from the nine co-signatories to have an open and formal debate about the responsibility to protect is also in line with the recommendations of the Secretary-General, who has stated that the principle is a key component of his prevention agenda.

The sole intention of this request is to foster debate on this important agenda item, preferably on the basis of a report by the Secretary-General, and it is the intention, should the Assembly decide to follow the recommendation of the General Committee, to use the debate to build bridges, not to increase the divide, between Member States on the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We therefore encourage Member States to vote in favour of the proposal to include the responsibility to protect

on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

Mr. Dotta (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Madam President, on your election to serve as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We have full confidence that, with your great skill, you will achieve great things in this difficult task, and, therefore, you have our full support.

Uruguay was one of the nine States that requested the inclusion of the item entitled "The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity" as a supplementary item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. My delegation deeply regrets that the defence of civilian populations does not have the same priority or high priority for some Member States. Uruguay firmly supports the Secretary-General's prevention strategy and, linked to that, understands that it is precisely prevention, an aspect of the responsibility to protect, to which my country assigns priority. Faced with an international context in which the threat of extremely serious crimes looms over millions of innocent human beings in an alarming manner, the General Assembly has an unavoidable obligation to address the concept by actively and transparently debating the mechanisms that will make it possible to prevent such atrocities from being repeated.

It should also be borne in mind that a significant number of States have been advocating the inclusion of this issue on the agenda of the General Assembly. In that regard, Uruguay traditionally considers, as a matter of principle, that any item suggested by any Member State should be considered and debated by the entire membership. My delegation agrees with what was stated in the latest report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/72/884), namely, that the General Assembly continues to be the most comprehensive and inclusive forum for implementing the concept of the responsibility to protect, particularly with regard to recommending preventive measures for Member States when necessary, and that we should continue to reflect on lessons learned, avoid mistakes, set priorities and provide guidance so as not to commit mistakes in the future. We therefore encourage Member States to vote in favour of including this item in the agenda of the General Assembly at its current session.

Uruguay calls on all of us to work in good faith on this concept, inspired by the absolute conviction that it is imperative to continue working with determination in the search for a common understanding that has as its ultimate goal the defence of the right to life and human dignity.

Ms. Pellegrom (Netherlands): Let me first join others in congratulating you, Madam President, on your election, and we assure you of our full support for your work in the coming year.

Together with Afghanistan, Denmark, Guatemala, Japan, Romania, Rwanda, Ukraine and Uruguay, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has requested the inclusion of a supplementary item on the responsibility to protect on the agenda of the General Assembly at its current session. During the previous session, the General Assembly held its first formal debate on the responsibility to protect since 2009. The very large number of Member States that actively participated in that debate not only illustrated their readiness to formally discuss the matter, but also helped us to build common ground. Furthermore, the debate gave us a better understanding of the differences of opinion on the scope and implementation of the concept of the responsibility to protect.

We think the most appropriate and efficient way to address those differences is in a continued open and formal dialogue. The Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore calls on all Member States present today to support the inclusion of the item on the responsibility to protect on the agenda of the General Assembly, in conformity with the recommendation of the General Committee.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider the question of the inclusion of the item in the agenda of General Assembly at its current session.

Before giving the floor to those members wishing to speak in explanation of vote before the voting, I would like to remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): I promise you, Madam President, that I will not use my full 10 minutes. In all brevity, since it is late on a Friday afternoon, and we have an important and strenuous week ahead of us, I would just like to underline that the European Union (EU) and its member States support including the

responsibility to protect on the formal agenda of the General Assembly as part of the effort to combat the alarming trend of an increasing number of deliberate attacks against civilians. We have to close the gap between rhetoric and action. We have to better harness the preventive potential of the responsibility to protect.

The debate we held in June 2018 and July (see A/72/PV.99, A/72/PV.100 and A/72/PV.105) was an opportunity to formalize our dialogue in the General Assembly on the responsibility to protect and to enable all sides to express their views. There is much that we all agree on, and it is only by deliberating and discussing that we can move to take appropriate action. For that reason, the member States of the EU will vote in favour of including the item on the responsibility to protect on the agenda of the General Assembly, as recommended by the General Committee, and we ask fellow Member States to do the same.

Ms. Argüello González (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Madam President, we would once again like to extend a warm welcome to you as you assume the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

We reiterate that it is still necessary to have further dialogue and consultation among Member States and the international community on the so-called responsibility to protect. We do not, therefore, agree that it should in fact be adopted and included on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

Nicaragua continues to stand firm with the international community and the United Nations against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. At the same time, we insist that the persistent danger posed by the responsibility to protect is that it could be manipulated by disguised interventionists who could try in various ways to justify interference and the use of force to destabilize and change legitimate Governments.

In conclusion, the delegation of Nicaragua will vote against the inclusion of this concept on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, and we urge other delegations to do the same.

Mr. Méndez Graterol (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Like the delegations that have preceded us and have spoken on our behalf, we would like to extend our congratulations to see you, Madam President, presiding over the work of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We wish you every success in the important responsibilities entrusted to you. You can count on the purposeful collaboration of the Venezuelan delegation to that end.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will vote against the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session because it considers the inclusion of the item will continue to detract from the possibility of consensus among Member States regarding its definition and scope. In that context, we are concerned that, through the forced implementation of that idea, given the bias in views, the sovereignty of States, as the guiding principle of international relations, will be weakened. We reiterate that this ambiguity can lead to confused or biased interpretations, which are part of double-standard policies, to the detriment of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The reservations that the so-called responsibility to protect presents, as does its inclusion on the agenda of the General Assembly at its current session, are supported by the traumatic experiences of military aggression that have taken place in the past two decades against peoples and countries in order to promote the overthrowing of Governments because of alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Those armed interventions, which are obviously illegal, have led to destabilization and the institutional dismantling of States, while causing further suffering among the civilians that they were supposed to protect.

We want to reiterate that Venezuela is firmly committed to the need to prevent crimes against humanity, wars, genocide and ethnic cleansing. We condemn any attempt to commit those serious crimes, and we have denounced them and fought against them. We have always been open to a broad and transparent discussion of that matter via informal dialogues aimed at building the necessary consensus, given the political and legal implications that accompany this matter. We believe that the prevention of the crimes covered by the Rome Statute must be based on the need to promote dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution, bearing in mind Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

For Venezuela, the responsibility to protect its citizens, including the promotion and respect of human rights, is a responsibility of the State, based on the full exercise of its sovereignty and political independence.

We are aware that that prerogative can in no way be used to commit crimes against humanity. Therefore, the concept of the responsibility to protect cannot be made equivalent to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the full observance of which is fundamental to maintaining international peace and security.

Lastly, in the light of what we have just mentioned, Venezuela will vote against the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

Ms. Gerardia González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

The delegation of Cuba is also grateful for the possibility to take the floor to explain its vote.

We wish first to recall that the issue of the so-called responsibility to protect is of serious concern to many countries, especially small developing countries, because of a lack of consensus on and definition of several elements of that issue, which can easily be manipulated for political purposes. We emphasize that such manipulation and politicization are seen as the outcome of the discussions that have taken place in the United Nations on that topic.

Against that background, Cuba believes that it is not yet time for the General Assembly to have a frank and transparent dialogue on the responsibility to protect. The discussion of that issue will lead to further differences of opinion within the Organization, since there is no clarity as to its scope and implications. The serious differences of interpretation with regard to the so-called responsibility to protect persist, and they will neither ensure its universal recognition and acceptance nor will give legitimacy to the proposed actions for its implementation.

For Cuba, combating crimes against humanity, genocide, ethnic cleansing and war crimes is a noble and just cause. However, we cannot accept the selectivity and double standards that are being hidden under a humanitarian veil in order to have a further tool to facilitate interference in the internal affairs of a State, regime-change agendas and the subversion of other countries, which are, we repeat, mostly small developing countries.

For all those reasons, we will vote against the inclusion of that item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

Mr. Moldogaziev (Kyrzgystan): As this is the first time I take the floor during the current session, allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you, Madam President, on your election. I would like to assure you that the delegation of the Kyrgyz Republic will support the work of the general Assembly under your leadership to enhance and strengthen the important role of the United Nations.

The principle of the responsibility to protect is not universally recognized. It is not unambiguously supported by all State Members of the United Nations. It is a concept rather than an international norm or standard. In that respect, we underscore the fact that the violation of a State's sovereignty and interference in its internal affairs for humanitarian or other reasons without the consent of the Government concerned is unacceptable. For those reasons, the Kyrgyz Republic will vote against the inclusion of the principle of the responsibility to protect on the official agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

Mr. Nasimfar (Islamic Republic of Iran): The Islamic Republic of Iran will vote against the inclusion of the item on the responsibility to protect (R2P) in the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, not because we oppose the basic idea contained in the concept but because we wish to draw the attention of Member States to the serious risk of a biased interpretation and application of R2P. We would like to reaffirm Iran's unwavering commitment to the noble goal of the protection of civilians. Needless to say, every State should embrace that responsibility vis-à-vis its population. That by no means implies permission to use force against other States under any pretext, such as humanitarian or pre-emptive intervention.

Actually, the actions and inaction of the proponents of the responsibility to protect in the past have not been consistent with the alleged objectives and purposes of that initiative. In theory, it seems that the protection of populations should be at the centre of the responsibility to protect. However, we have witnessed that, in principle, the responsibility to protect is guided by the politicized interests of States, rather than human dignity and human rights, and has therefore been applied in a selective manner. Its selective application has put into

question its legitimacy and validity as a principle of international law.

On the other hand, the abuse of the responsibility to protect in the past, based on political grounds, has brought about disastrous results, and has therefore diminished that initiative to a tool at the service of certain Powers. As such, that abuse has increased doubts with regard to its future applicability and success. It is obvious that the inaction of the international community vis à-vis some humanitarian tragedies should not be attributed to the absence of a normative framework or a lack of implementation of the responsibility to protect. The horrible genocide in Rwanda serves as a clear example of such inaction by the Security Council owing to a lack of political will among some of its permanent members.

With that in mind, the question arises as to how some responsibility-to-protect proponents who recognize the responsibility to protect as a legal principle are going to fulfil their obligations with regard to the protection of populations, while simultaneously selling their arms, with the prior knowledge or experience that those arms will almost certainly eventually end up being used to target civilians and civilian objects and will ultimately lead to war crimes and crimes against humanity, killing innocent civilians. In recent years, tens of thousands of civilians have been victimized by those so-called "beautiful arms", either in their homes or during public ceremonies, such as funerals and weddings, and even in schools, school buses and hospitals. The conduct of the arms-exporting proponents of the responsibility to protect raises profound scepticism about their seriousness and honesty concerning the noble objective of the protection of civilians.

One thing is abundantly clear — favoured ones have always been granted impunity and their atrocities have always been overlooked, no matter how serious and grave they are. Particularly, it becomes a matter of grave concern when disastrous atrocities committed against civilians by a friendly country are covered up in a systematic manner in order to avoid attracting the attention of world public opinion. Sadly, the R2P proponents prefer to keep silent and avoid confronting the world's worst humanitarian disasters so as to appease their allies.

Last year, the proponents of the inclusion of an item on R2P on the agenda of the seventy-second session, aware of the profound differences among Member States, told us in the Hall that the request would be a one-time opportunity. We are witnessing quite the opposite. Notwithstanding the formal discussion that took place in the General Assembly, we are still far from a consensual understanding of R2P implementation. A formal discussion in the General Assembly is not an appropriate format to address existing conceptual differences among Member States. We reiterate our call that, prior to the implementation of the R2P, it is crucial to define its normative contents, as well as its scope of applications, by holding informal interactive dialogue, as agreed in 2009.

Finally, the only way to restore R2P and its legitimacy is to abolish the selectivity in a way that genuinely addresses the plight of humankind whenever it faces atrocity crimes, in full conformity with the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. Addressing the misery of people under foreign occupation is the most immediate litmus test for R2P.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): India, like other delegations, would like to warmly congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of office as the President of the Assembly. We wish you success in fulfilling your important responsibilities.

Today, very early in the seventy-third session, we are faced with the need to decide by a vote on a recommendation that was subject to a vote in the General Committee. A vote in the General Committee, which is a rarity, is now becoming common. It represents a growing lack of consensus even on the issues to be discussed by the General Assembly. However, even by the standards of a lack of consensus, rare is the occasion when the same item is required to be voted upon both in the General Committee and in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly in two consecutive sessions. Unfortunately, that is the situation we are facing today in the case of the item that is now under discussion.

India was one of the delegations that last year voted in favour of the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the seventy-second session. We did so as we went by the assurance provided then that the intention was to have a one-off formal discussion to understand the broad positions of Member States on the responsibility to protect (R2P), as such a formal debate had not been undertaken for almost a decade. Following that outcome, as we are all aware, the General Assembly held three plenary meetings on 25 June and 2 July (see A/72/PV.99, A72/PV.100 and 72/PV.105) to hear 80 statements outlining positions during the debate. We

recall that many of those statements called for caution and stressed that the international community should define the understanding, applications, implementation and effects on States of both the international and internal dimensions of the concept of R2P.

That showed that there exists division among Member States on the further continuation of the discussion in that format. Now that we have had a formal discussion on the concept and have seen the existence of serious differences, as recently as the session that just concluded, an effort must be made to bridge the gaps in understanding the concept. Dialogue and discussion need not always be associated only with formal debates. Opportunities for convergence can perhaps also grow from informal and interactive consideration. Hence, trying to push through processes for formal consideration when there is no clear consensus may not be the best way forward.

In view of those reasons, my delegation is constrained to change our vote from supporting the inclusion of the item at the last session to abstaining in the voting on the item this time. We do so in the belief that we can continue our discussion on the concept of R2P in various formats in a spirit of collaborative diplomacy, rather than moving along on the basis of a formal process that is being contested repeatedly and does not provide scope for convergence.

Mr. Stefanile (Italy): Joining previous speakers, Madam, allow me first to congratulate you on your election. We assure you of our full support in your work in the coming year.

Italy strongly supports the General Committee's recommendation that the responsibility to protect be included on the formal agenda of the General Assembly. In our capacity of co-Chair, together with Qatar, of the Group of Friends on the Responsibility to Protect, our goal in keeping with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations is to foster dialogue through an exchange of views and experiences and to build consensus on what the United Nations and its States Members should do to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We are well aware of the different opinions and concerns within the membership, but discussing them is precisely the reason that we come together in the Assembly.

The founding of the Organization was inspired by the need to prevent the mass atrocities of the Second World War from recurring, with nations standing together against those crimes and initiating informal dialogue on how to prevent them in the future. That is why we believe that holding an open, transparent and inclusive debate in the General Assembly on the responsibility to protect will be a significant step forward in developing together preventive solutions, using existing early warning mechanisms and taking action when necessary.

The success of the 25 June and 2 July debate (see A/72/PV.99, A/72/PV.100 and A/72/PV.105) on the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity proves the need for further discussion of the issue. The event saw a record list of speakers, who intervened for two days. Italy will therefore vote in favour of the inclusion of the item on the agenda of the General Assembly and calls on all Member States to do the same.

Mr. Almawda (Qatar): At the outset, I would like to join others in welcoming you, Madam, on your assumption of the presidency. I assure you of our full support.

The State of Qatar would like to express its full support for the General Committee recommendation for the inclusion of the responsibility to protect on the formal agenda of the seventy-third session.

The State of Qatar has been encouraged by the strong cross-regional support we have witnessed in favour of addressing ways in which Member States and the international community can further prevent mass atrocities, genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity by supporting and strengthening the United Nations early warning system. The responsibility to protect highlights the need to prevent these crimes from occurring and reflects the existing and shared responsibility of Member States to play a necessary role in prevention.

As the responsibility to protect also falls in line with the Secretary-General's recommendations, being a key accompaniment of his prevention agenda, we reiterate our full support oforthe General Committee recommendation. We call on all Member States to support the inclusion of that item on the formal agenda.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): Ukraine strongly supports the recommendation of the General Committee to include the item on the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic

cleansing and crimes against humanity on the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly.

On many occasions in this Hall, my delegation has affirmed its commitment to the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, unanimously adopted by the General Assembly in that year. Furthermore, through the explicit endorsement of the provisions of the responsibility to protect in 2006, the Security Council underlined their significance.

This year's discussion of the responsibility to protect served as yet another affirmation of its importance for the international community, particularly in the light of the persistent and widening gap between the commitments and actions of some Member States. As a party to the core instruments of international law relating to the prevention of atrocity crimes, the protection of populations, the upholding of human rights and the elimination of all forms of discrimination, we believe that the inclusion of the item will serve as a platform for discussions among Member States on how to narrow gaps and build bridges between respective positions.

In that regard, my delegation had the honour to be a sponsor of the relevant request to the Secretary-General and will vote in favour of the inclusion of the item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We encourage all Member States to do the same.

Mr. Lie Cheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its current session. China will firmly support your work.

With regard to the issue of the responsibility to protect, the 2005 World Summit Outcome document provides a clear description of the responsibility to protect concept. Its applicability is limited to only four atrocities, namely, genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and must be discussed on a case-by-case basis upon the authorization of the Security Council in strict accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. In view of the discussion during the previous session (see A/72/PV.99, A/72/PV.100 and A/72/PV.105), Member States still have significant differences on the interpretation and the implementation of that concept. We are concerned about the possible expanded use, or even abuse, of the concept. We therefore believe that national Governments should assume the primary responsibility to protect their citizens and that the principle of ownership by Member States must be followed. Member States can engage in an informal dialogue on the issue in order to overcome their differences.

In the light of that, China does not support forcing through any controversial initiatives, which will only undermine the fragile consensus among Member States. China opposes the inclusion of such an item on the agenda of the current session. During the previous two sessions of the General Assembly, we voted against the draft resolution. At the General Committee meeting on Wednesday, we also voted against its inclusion, and we will do the same today.

Mr. Stone (Australia): Last year, Ghana and Australia submitted a request to include the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. That was a response to a call for a General Assembly debate, including by States without standing concerns in relation to the responsibility to protect. Our goal was to foster dialogue and to help to build consensus. The proposal of Ghana and Australia concerned a debate at the seventy-second session.

During this year's General Assembly debate on the responsibility to protect (see A/72/PV.99, A/72/PV.100 and A/72/PV.105), there was an overwhelming recognition of the value of the ongoing dialogue within the General Assembly on the issue. We understand that there remain different views with regard to the responsibility to protect and its implementation. That is a reason to continue our dialogue. Australia supports the inclusion of the item on this year's agenda.

Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana): Guyana will vote in favour of the inclusion of the item on the agenda of the seventy-third session because we believe that the General Assembly is the forum for Member States to debate issues of that nature on which there is no consensus and to seek solutions through dialogue.

We believe that the concept and practice of the responsibility to protect are important for the times in which we live. However, we recognize that there may be legitimate concerns about the possible misuse of the responsibility to protect, but we believe that that is all the more reason that it should be discussed, with a view to finding ways to curb any excesses or misuse to which it may give rise.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on the recommendation by the General Committee for the inclusion of item 170, entitled "The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity", in the agenda of the current session.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yemen

Against:

Belarus, Burundi, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Gabon, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam

The recommendation contained in paragraph 105 of the report contained in document A/73/250 was approved by 93 votes to 16, with 17 abstentions.

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): I take the floor to make an explanation of vote on the inclusion of the agenda item on the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Singapore voted in favour of the inclusion of the agenda item. However, we would have preferred that this issue be resolved through a consensus decision. Unfortunately, consensus was not possible in this instance.

The reality is that there remain deep differences among Member States on the concept of the responsibility to protect (R2P), and we are aware that the issue continues to divide Member States. The voting in the General Committee a few days ago and in the General Assembly today indicates clearly that the divisions are deep. In such a context, it is important to build trust and confidence so as to nurture a dialogue and gradually build some common understanding. I recall that last year the proponents of this agenda item provided clear assurance that their request for inclusion of this item was one-off and that this item would be included in the agenda of the seventy-second session only. We were therefore surprised that this agenda item was introduced once again at the seventy-third session.

We are equally surprised by the fact that their request was pushed through the General Committee earlier this week with little or no discussion or consultation with the wider United Nations membership. That raises an important question — is the inclusion of this agenda item meant to foster dialogue and build consensus or is it intended to make a political point in the General Assembly?

Singapore has always attached importance to dialogue and discussion. Of course, the General Assembly is a forum for open-ended dialogue among all Member States, including on difficult issues such as R2P. We will not stand in the way of any dialogue on any issue. However, Singapore also strongly believes that it is important to nurture a dialogue on R2P

that is productive and constructive. In our view, an open debate is not always the best way to build trust and confidence. Sometimes an informal, interactive dialogue can be more helpful in allowing for a candid exchange of views.

It is therefore our hope that the proponents will avoid the temptation to turn this agenda item into an annual exercise of statements and political rhetoric. If this agenda item becomes an annual ritual, mechanical in fashion, to score political points, Singapore will be obliged to review its position carefully. It is our hope that this agenda item does not become an exercise to deepen divisions in the General Assembly.

Let me conclude with a final point. Any dialogue, formal or informal, must be based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Such dialogue must also be conducted on the basis of mutual respect and understanding, and with sensitivity to the differences of views among Member States. We should all be careful to avoid using a discussion on this agenda item to further deepen divisions and differences among Member States. If we are serious about a dialogue on this issue, it is important that we keep our word, that we build confidence and trust among one another and make an effort to understand each other's differences. In particular, we should avoid going in the direction of country-specific resolutions, as such an approach will not help to build confidence or to build consensus.

Ms. Elgarf (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We offer the support of the Arab Republic of Egypt for all of your work.

(*spoke in English*)

My delegation takes the floor in explanation of the vote after the voting. We regret that this issue — namely, to include an agenda item entitled "The responsibility to protect and the prevention of war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity" on the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly — has come to such a conclusion. We note that the voting in and of itself dispels any misconceptions or illusions that there is consensus on the notion of the responsibility to protect (R2P) or on how to move forward in that regard.

We would like to affirm Egypt's steadfast and unwavering commitment to the noble goal of the protection of civilians. Disturbed by the increasing attacks on health-care workers and facilities, and growing impediments to the deliver of health care in a wide range of contemporary conflicts, Egypt, during its presidency of the Security Council in 2016, along with four other co-penholders, drafted and successfully adopted resolution 2286 (2016) on the protection of health care in armed conflict. The resolution sent a strong and clear message from the Council that attacks targeting hospitals and medical workers were unacceptable and would not be tolerated. It also urged States to ensure accountability against the perpetration of such crimes targeting health-care facilities or health-care personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties during armed conflict.

We nevertheless believe that the notion of R2P still contains a number of political and legal gaps that, if let unattended, would do more harm than good with regard to its universal acceptance. Such gaps need first to be addressed and a consensus must be reached on the conceptual framework of the notion before any further steps are taken to mainstream the notion of R2P across the United Nations system. Moving forward, we ask that no draft resolutions be brought forward following the Assembly's consideration of the item.

Mr. Oña Garcés (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): In 2005, Ecuador supported the adoption of resolution 60/1, unanimously endorsing the World Summit Outcome Document, which clearly defined the three pillars that should underpin the idea of the responsibility to protect (R2P). Since then, my country has been consistent in defending, at every occasion, its constitutional principles, which stipulate the need to ensure full respect for human rights and the obligation of States to do the same as essential elements of coexistence. We reiterate that, for Ecuador, the three pillars of R2P should follow a strict line of political subordination and chronological succession and sequence in consistently promoting the first and second pillars, in the understanding that the third pillar and the potential use of force must come into play only in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, and can be implemented only in accordance with Chapters VI and VII of the Charter of the United Nations and the purposes and principles established therein.

For Ecuador, the responsibility to protect is a topic that cannot be taken lightly because, although its conceptual basis is humanitarian, it must be

implemented under premises that do not undermine the rights and sovereignty of States. As we pointed out in the plenary debate on R2P held in June (see A/72/PV.99 and A/72/PV.100), only the General Assembly has the legal capacity and authority to establish a consensual definition of the responsibility to protect and, in particular, to set the conceptual, institutional and political dimensions for carrying out its implementation. The responsibility to protect is therefore a concept that requires greater analysis among the States Members of the Organization.

Ecuador believes that the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly provides an opportunity to discuss it with greater political interest and commitment in a constructive and transparent manner. We must, however, avoid politicizing dialogue that will prevent us from ensuring the protection of civilians in all places where genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity are being carried out. That is why Ecuador voted in favour of including the item on the agenda for this session of the Assembly.

Mr. Situmorang (Indonesia): Indonesia supports the inclusion of the agenda item due to its great concern about the increasing number of crises involving genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. We have also witnessed a growing number of refugees and displaced persons. The issue has been the subject of a long and heated debate, involving a striking difference of interpretation and expectations. We regret the fact that it has caused divisiveness in this body. We would prefer to discuss the issue that brings us all together, namely, the rubric of sustaining peace, focusing on conflict-prevention.

Based on that understanding, although we are not comfortable that the purpose of the agenda item is not in line with the initial agreement that the debate was meant to be a one-off, we are open to discussing the issue. Our position is clear — the obligation to protect civilians should be first and foremost the responsibility of the country concerned. The entire discussion should therefore be redirected towards strengthening the capacity of countries in fulfilling that mandate and not interfering in the sovereignty and territorial integrity of others. Helping the capability of a country to improve its early-warning system and conflict prevention will also assist the implementation of the sustaining peace concept that should be our priority in this body.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

We shall now proceed with the next part of the item on our agenda.

We will now turn to paragraph 106, in connection with item 176 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the New Development Bank in the General Assembly". The General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 107, in connection with item 177 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 108, in connection with item 178 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the European Public Law Organization in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 109, in connection with item 179 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 110, in connection with item 180 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the agenda recommended by the General Committee in paragraph 111 of its report for adoption by the General Assembly, taking into account the decisions just adopted with respect to the draft agenda.

Bearing in mind that the agenda is organized under nine headings, we shall consider the inclusion of items under each heading as a whole. I should like to remind members once again that, at present, we are not discussing the substance of any item.

Items 1 and 2 have already been dealt with. We shall now turn to items 3 to 8. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the inclusion of the items listed under heading A, "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences".

May I take it that the items listed under heading A are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to heading B, "Maintenance of international peace and security". May I take it that the items listed under heading B are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Ms. Simonyan (Armenia): We have asked for the floor to put it on record that Armenia dissociates itself from the decision to include item 41 in the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. We kindly ask that Armenia's position be duly reflected in the official record of the meeting.

The President: We will proceed as requested.

Next we turn to heading C, "Development of Africa". May I take it that the item listed under this heading is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we come to heading D, "Promotion of human rights". May I take it that the items listed under heading D are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Heading E is entitled "Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts". May I take it that the item listed under this heading is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next we turn to heading F, "Promotion of justice and international law". May I take it that the items listed under heading F are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to heading G, "Disarmament". May I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Heading H is entitled "Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations". May I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we turn to heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the items listed under heading I are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to section IV of the report of the General Committee on the allocation of items.

The General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 112 to 114. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in paragraph 114 concerning the granting of observer status?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 116 to 119. We shall take up the recommendations paragraph by paragraph. However, before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers cited here refer to the

agenda in paragraph 111 of the report before us, namely, document A/73/250.

We shall now turn to paragraphs 116 (a) to (r), relating to a number of plenary items. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information that the General Committee wishes it to take note of and approve all of the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 116 (a) to (r)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraphs 117 (a) to (c), relating to sub-item (c) of item 99, "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space"; item 101, "General and complete disarmament"; sub-item (mm), "Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World"; and sub-item (oo), "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" of item 101. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 117 (a) to (c)?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to paragraphs 118 (a) and (b), relating to item 137, "Programme planning", and item 147, "Administration of justice at the United Nations". May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 118 (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraphs 119 (a) to (g), relating to the Sixth Committee. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information that the General Committee wishes it to take note of and approve all of the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 119 (a) to (g)?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to paragraph 120 of the report of the General Committee on the allocation of items to the plenary and to each Main Committee.

I first turn to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed for plenary meetings?

It was so decided.

The President: We come next to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the First Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

It was so decided.

The President: We come now to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Second Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Third Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation

to the Sixth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the Members of the Assembly for their cooperation and for their patience this Friday afternoon.

I would now like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the Holy See, in its capacity as an observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolution 58/314 of 1 July 2004, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/58/871, the Holy See, in its capacity as an observer State, will participate in the work of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

I would also like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolutions 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974, 43/177, of 15 December 1988, 52/250, of 7 July 1998, and 67/19, of 29 November 2012, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002, the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, will participate in the work of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

In addition, I would like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolution 65/276, of 3 May 2011, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/65/856, representatives of the European Union will participate in the work of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/73/PV.4

General Assembly

Seventy-third session

Official Records

4th plenary meeting
Monday, 24 September 2018, 9.30 a.m.
New York

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 9.35 a.m.

High-level plenary meeting, to be known as the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit

Agenda item 66

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Draft resolution (A/73/L.1)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): This high-level plenary meeting is held in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/243 of 22 December 2017, and takes place under agenda item 66, entitled "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace".

I warmly welcome everyone to this high-level meeting, which will focus on global peace in honour of the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela.

The General Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/73/L.1, entitled "Political declaration adopted at the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit". Before proceeding further, I would like to inform Members that action on the draft political declaration will be taken at the end of this opening meeting.

I would now like to make a statement.

It is an honour for me to be here today to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela, one of the greatest leaders of our time. He was a leader who taught us that it is possible to forgive and for reconciliation and peace to prevail over hate and vengeance. I would like to acknowledge the presence at today's meeting of Dr. Helena Ndume of Namibia, who was one of the first-ever laureates of the Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize, along with the former President of Portugal Jorge Sampaio, who, regrettably, could not be here with us today. Their efforts to provide inclusive access to health and education are an inspiration and honour Nelson Mandela's legacy in today's world.

Today the extraordinary legacy of Nelson Mandela is stronger than ever, five years after his death. Mandela was always guided by the founding principles of the United Nations. He exemplified the values of peace, solidarity, cooperation and respect for all human beings, regardless of their colour, political views or religious beliefs. Mandela himself once said,

> "For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others".

I had the privilege of meeting President Mandela in Johannesburg in 2002 during the Rio+10 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Madiba's love for South Africa shone in his eyes. His profound respect for human dignity permeated his interaction with those around him. Mandela refused to accept the injustices of his time, and it is for that reason that his legacy represents a beacon of hope for a world still ravaged by conflict and suffering.

The threat of the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons still looms large. Tensions between nuclear-weapon States, territorial disputes, ethnic divisions and the oppression of minorities persist. This bleak outlook poses a serious threat to peace and security

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

Accessible document Please recycle

that we must tackle and resolve together. We are at a point where certain principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations have been called into question. The very principle of multilateralism is being challenged. There are fears about our ability to take collective action to address the world's most pressing issues, such as poverty and hunger, climate change, conflict and war. A move away from multilateralism would jeopardize the future of humankind and of our planet. The world needs a social contract based on shared responsibility, and the only forum we have for achieving that global compact is the United Nations. That is why this year I am calling for us to recommit to its founding principles and to multilateralism. And the General Assembly is the most representative and legitimate forum we have for dialogue and reconciliation aimed at building collective peace and security.

The draft political declaration (A/73/L.1) we will adopt today, thanks to the commitment of States and the wise leadership of South Africa and Ireland, is a demonstration of the central role played by the Assembly in achieving global agreements on peace and security around the world.

The Nelson Mandela peace declaration represents a relaunching of our commitment to peace and a renewal of States' willingness to build a peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and fair world. It calls on us to reflect on the thousands of victims of conflicts in the world who need immediate help from us, the States. The declaration reaffirms our commitment to the sovereignty and sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

Respect for the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples represents a starting point for maintaining peace and harmony among nations. It is clear that we can uphold and respect the self-determination and sovereignty of our countries while also committing to collective and coordinated action to build more peaceful, sustainable and resilient societies. As Madiba knew, there can be no peace if there are still millions of people without access to quality education, health care or decent work, and if there is still hunger and suffering. But that requires strong global leadership, which is so well represented in this Hall this morning.

It is an honour for me to preside over the General Assembly as we adopt a declaration that will undoubtedly give hope to the world and that further reaffirms that it is only through multilateralism and its clearest expression — the United Nations Organization — that it will be possible to achieve the peace and security to which we aspire in order to achieve development and prosperity.

There are many challenges we face in achieving peace, and we must ask ourselves how we are going to address them. Whether we do it together, or alone and divided, the answer is entirely up to us. Personally, I believe that we should always choose to walk together on the path of peace. There is no other option. In Mandela's words, "It always seems impossible until it is done." As a Latin American poet said, "Some people transcend death." Madiba's gentle, profound gaze and serene strength, which transformed violence into peace and aggression into forgiveness, are more alive today than ever.

I warmly welcome everyone to this high-level meeting.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: Nelson Mandela was one of humankind's great leaders. He embodied the highest values of the United Nations. He devoted his life to serving his community — as a lawyer, a prisoner of conscience, a peacemaker, a president and a respected elder. He cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all people live together in equality and harmony. That was a bedrock cause for which he was prepared to fight and die. He faced his oppressors in court, knowing they had the power of life and death, and he refused to back down. As a political prisoner, he steadfastly refused to allow his dignity to be undermined, and he became a rallying point for a global movement that led to the dismantling of the apartheid regime. The role played by the United Nations is a milestone in our proud history.

As President of South Africa, Madiba championed women's rights and South Africa's landmark 1996 Constitution, which remains a beacon for human rights and equal opportunity. Under his leadership, South Africa expanded access to health care, education, housing, water, sanitation and electricity. Beyond South Africa's borders, Madiba was a profound influence for peace and democracy. In Burundi, for example, he played a key role in brokering the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, and everywhere he was a champion for peace, forgiveness, humility, com ,sion, dignity and human rights.

This year we mark the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Almost exactly 20 years ago, Nelson Mandela spoke about that landmark document in this Hall (see A/53/PV.7). He urged all leaders to have the courage to ensure that eventually we can build a human world consistent with the provisions of that historic Declaration. Those were the words of Nelson Mandela. Today, with human rights under growing pressure around the world, we would be well served by reflecting on the example of this outstanding man. We must face the forces that threaten us with the wisdom, courage and fortitude that Nelson Mandela embodied. That is the only way to build the just, peaceful and prosperous world envisioned in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Madiba was a global citizen whose legacy must continue to guide us. To honour that legacy, the Government of South Africa has generously donated a statue of Madiba that I was honoured to unveil this morning. In 2015, the United Nations also decided to award the Nelson Mandela Prize every five years to two individuals who have made significant contributions to the service of humankind. The first recipients were Namibian philanthropic eye surgeon Helena Ndume and my good friend Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal. Each year, we also observe Nelson Mandela International Day by promoting and engaging in community service. Today we remember a man of great wisdom, quiet dignity and towering achievement who worked tirelessly for peace and human dignity for people everywhere. That is our Organization's purpose and, as leaders, it is our responsibility. Let us commit to building on Nelson Mandela's legacy so that all people everywhere can enjoy peace, prosperity and inclusive and sustainable development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/243, I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

Mr. Mahamat (African Union) (*spoke in French*): The life, struggle, work and symbolic significance of Nelson Mandela go beyond our imaginings. His life was one of unparalleled riches and will remain the embodiment of fulfilled abundance. Words will never be adequate to describe him. As we all know, he shone his light in this Hall and in every corner of our planet where the thirst for peace, freedom and equality drained people's spirits and haunted humankind.

In January 2014, in remembrance of all that and many other things, the Summit of Heads of State of the African Union decided to declare 2014-2024 the Nelson Mandela Decade in Africa. In that regard, in January 2018 the thirtieth Summit of Heads of State and Government agreed to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela this year. Subsequently, the July 2018 Summit supported holding the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit on the margins of the current session of the General Assembly. In the same spirit, on 22 December 2017, the General Assembly decided to convene a high-level plenary meeting on peace to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela.

The United Nations and the African Union have once again come together with enthusiasm to commemorate and honour the centenary of the birth of a giant of the modern history of Africa and the world, who matured through suffering, hardship and adversity and who dedicated his wisdom, his courage, his intelligence, his thought, his ethics, his humanism and all his faith to the freedom and dignity of humankind in all their nobility and morality, not only for the black man but for man and his place in relation to history and for history in relation to man.

Today we are commemorating the centenary of his birth. While we mourn his physical loss, we are also proud to have had him as a supreme symbol of the African man and an inexhaustible source of inspiration for all generations. The true hallmarks of Madiba are not only his tenacity, courage and determination, or his ability to transcend human fragilities as he described them — egotism, vengefulness and the inability to forgive — but above all his dedication and commitment to humanism and the universal. He has gone down in history, he made history and he has made African history everlasting. At a time when multilateralism is suffering attacks from all sides, through selfishness, intolerance, withdrawal and rejection of those different from us, the commemoration of Madiba's centenary resounds in our lives as an intense call for freedom, solidarity and peace among humankind.

What would he have said today in the light of all the challenges and anxieties we are facing? He would certainly have told us not to yield to fatalism or to

abandon our struggle for life. He would certainly not have told us to resolve our conflicts with fire and the sword, nor with hatred, exclusion, repression or the oppression of others. On the contrary, he would have urged us to redouble our efforts to dare to fight and to win.

At this emotionally charged moment in this high-level meeting of the world's decision-makers, I would like to voice the full commitment of the African Union and Africa to the universal values that Madiba embodied, which are his legacy and for which he gave the best of himself for eternity. Our tribute to an immortal icon also sends a vivid message of our esteem and respect for all the fighters for freedom everywhere in the world. In that regard, we are pleased to see that the heirs of that great man in the rainbow nation that he brought forth, South Africa — and beyond it, in the rest of Africa and throughout the world — remain passionately committed to his universal message and more determined than ever to carry on his legacy. May the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit represent a decisive step in establishing genuine peace in the world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*) I thank Mr. Mahamat for his statement.

In accordance with decision 72/564 B, of 13 September 2018, I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa.

President Ramaphosa: On behalf of the Mandela family and the people of South Africa, allow me to express our humble appreciation to the United Nations for convening this special Summit in honour of the founding President of our democracy, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

In 1994, during his inaugural address to the General Assembly, President Mandela said,

> "The great challenge of our age to the United Nations is to answer the question 'Given the interdependence of the nations of the world, what is it that we can and must do to ensure that democracy, peace and prosperity prevail everywhere?'" (*A/49/PV.14, pp.8-9*)

The signing of the Charter of the United Nations took place more than 70 years ago, in a world different from ours today. It was a world still reeling from the clash of great Powers in the Second World War that cost the lives of close to 5 per cent of the world's population at the time. It was from that collective trauma that the United Nations was born. Countries sought to reimagine a world where nations would cooperate rather than clash, and where friendly relations would lead to social progress, peace and development and a better life for all. For those noble ideas to be realized, however, they needed to find expression in the actions of those taking up the mantle of leadership at the most trying of times.

One such leader was born in the small village of Mvezo, in the eastern part of South Africa, in 1918. He would come to represent the hopes of millions of South Africans who dreamed of a life unshackled from a system that limited their potential and stifled their possibilities based merely on the colour of their skin. The story of South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy, and the role played in it by Nelson Mandela, is well known. It is a story of humankind's great capacity for goodness, peace and hope. It was also that capacity that led to the establishment of the United Nations, which served as an important platform for the anti-apartheid movement and which continues to be a platform for other struggles against oppression, war and global injustice. Since the formation of the United Nations, the world has faced many crises that have tested the limits of diplomacy and the multilateral system. Throughout those crises, the United Nations has endured as a force for stability, cooperation and the peaceful resolution of conflict.

While much has been done to ensure that the world will never go to war against itself again, the Organization has nonetheless continued to face more intricate and complex challenges. Over the past seven decades, millions of people worldwide have been killed, some maimed and others displaced, and many have starved as a result of war and conflicts. Women and children continue to bear a disproportionate burden of those troubles. While we have managed to avoid another world war, we have continued to grapple with the haunting spectre of modern atrocities such as the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica. We are confronting intra-State armed conflicts in Syria, South Sudan and Yemen, protracted turmoil in a number of parts of Africa and struggles for self-determination in Western Sahara and Palestine. They show that the current threats to international peace and security are more the result of conflicts within States and the effects that they have across nations that have become increasingly interdependent, rather than of traditional conflicts between States.

Terrorism, transnational organized crime, illicit flows of finance and growing numbers of refugees pose significant threats to global order and peace. No longer can we ignore the troubles of those in distant parts of the world, or fail to address the root causes of conflicts that we often imagine are foreign to us. To respond to those threats, we need a United Nations that is responsive, adaptable and also able to deal with challenges that its founders could not have imagined. It should not rely merely on the political interests of a few, as an impasse between the major Powers often impedes the entire Organization's ability to act. Instead, we should draw on the strength of the collective in resolving complex challenges. The United Nations can succeed only to the degree that we, as global leaders, provide visionary leadership that transcends our ideological differences and narrow national interests.

Through this Peace Summit, the current generation of global leadership has been given a wonderful opportunity not only to reflect on peace in the world, but also to take the measures necessary to end the wars that continue to take millions of innocent lives. We are called on to act decisively to end the exposure of women and children to untold suffering, including displacement, torture, rape, mutilation and murder. We are called on to ensure that women are afforded a special role in peace negotiations, political transitions and in ensuring durable security for all. We must be unanimous in our support for the work of the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN-Women in ensuring that women take centre stage on issues of peace and security and provide leadership in peace operations. We welcome efforts to achieve the equal representation of women in leadership positions in United Nations peacekeeping missions.

In our search for peace, we dare not ignore the continued existence of weapons of mass destruction, whose capacity for human devastation is too dreadful to contemplate. Twenty years ago almost to the day, President Mandela addressed the General Assembly for the last time. He said,

> "We must ask the question, which might sound naive to those who have elaborated sophisticated arguments to justify their refusal to eliminate these terrible and terrifying weapons of mass destruction — why do they need them, anyway?" (*A/53/PV.7, p.14*)

To this day, his question has been met with no satisfactory answer. The truth is that there can be no justification for the existence of weapons that carry with them the potential to extinguish life on this planet. We therefore applaud the adoption by the General Assembly last year of the groundbreaking Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. South Africa will soon deposit its instrument of ratification of that historic Treaty. We call on all peace-loving States to ratify the Treaty so that it comes into force without any delay.

As we strive for peace, we cannot escape the reality that conflict and hostility have their roots in poverty, exclusion and marginalization. Unless we confront the conditions under which the poor of the world live, we will not succeed in building a peaceful and stable world. It is for that reason that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is also very much an agenda for peace. The Sustainable Development Goals entail a set of interdependent objectives whose fulfilment would be the ultimate act of conflict prevention. We must ensure that the United Nations — in its form, operation and orientation — is able to maintain international peace and security, protect human rights and achieve sustainable development for all.

Today we are gathered as world leaders, representing the hopes of billions for a peaceful, prosperous world. It was the desire for such a world that prompted this Peace Summit, with a view to taking stock of how the United Nations has performed in the pursuit of peace. It provides a moment for us as Heads of State and Government to recommit to achieving the social and economic development necessary for the prevention of conflict. It is an opportunity to pledge to one another and to our peoples our determination to seek peaceful solutions to our political differences and to build peace in those countries emerging from the destruction of war, violence and the perpetuation of hate. It is our deepest hope that this Summit, in the name of one of our greatest exemplars of humankind, Nelson Mandela, can serve as a new dawn for the United Nations.

We hope the Summit will give expression to the Secretary-General's call for a surge in diplomacy. We hope we will rediscover the strength of will to save successive generations from war and to overcome the hatred of our past and the narrow interests that blind us to the vision of a common future that is peaceful and prosperous. We hope we will prove ourselves worthy as the bearers of the legacy of Nelson Mandela.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of South Africa for his statement.

In accordance with decision 72/564 B, I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Leo Varadkar, Taoiseach and Minister of Defence of Ireland.

Mr. Varadkar (Ireland): It is my great honour to join the General Assembly today as we adopt the draft Nelson Mandela political declaration (A/73/L.1). It reminds us that Mandela's is a living legacy, entrusted to us so we can be torchbearers for peace and reconciliation for this and future generations.

Side by side with our great friends from South Africa, Ireland was privileged to co-facilitate the work that has led to today's Political Declaration. Together with everyone here today, I reaffirm that Ireland will continue to uphold the ideals and values of the United Nations and work with the international community to achieve the aims that Mandela himself worked for so tirelessly during his lifetime. In Mandela's story we recognize the struggles and triumphs of one individual and the challenges and hope for humankind. His fight for freedom and dignity for all — irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, colour or creed — spoke to our vision of a common humanity and proved that the seemingly impossible can indeed become a reality. It was reflected in South Africa's first democratic Constitution, which is a template for new democracies today.

This year in Ireland we mark 20 years of the Good Friday Agreement, which after decades of bitter violence brought peace to Britain and Ireland, closer cooperation between north and south and power-sharing in Northern Ireland — at least most of the time. The Northern Ireland peace process was advanced with the wisdom and assistance of friends from around the world, including President Ramaphosa, and for that we will always be grateful. We have witnessed firsthand the profound truths that Nelson Mandela showed through his wisdom and through his actions: that violent conflict is not inevitable and can be ended; that peace is made not with one's friends but with one's enemies; that reconciliation is achieved by moving beyond the hurt and pain of the past towards truth and forgiveness and, perhaps most profoundly of all, that through justice and forgiveness we can free the prisoner and free the jailer as well.

Twenty-eight years ago, just months after he was released from prison, on an occasion etched in my memory as a young boy who watched it on television, Nelson Mandela was accorded the special honour of being invited to speak to the Irish Parliament. There he inspired us all with his words as he attacked the arrogance of racism and honoured those who dared to cry freedom. In our native Irish language, we say of truly remarkable individuals: *Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís*, which means "We will never see his like again". I can think of no better way to describe the uniqueness of Mandela. I believe that his legacy is truly international and points to a deeper truth. A voice may be silenced by death, but its message can never be suppressed. It is heard for all time and rings through the ages, and it finds a home in the hearts, minds and values of those who follow after.

Inspired by the message of Nelson Mandela again, we in this Hall should provide a voice for the oppressed around the world and find shared solutions guided by shared values, such as our belief in and commitment to multilateralism, to the freedom of the individual, free enterprise, human rights, democracy and the protection of our planet. We should look to this declaration as we face the challenges of the twenty-first century. Recognizing all that is being done in the area of gender discrimination, we must renew our efforts to further advance gender equality around the world, and we must give young people a greater say in the decisions that will affect them and the future of our planet.

War and hatred come in many guises, but peace has the same face the world over. It is the image of those who open their hearts and minds to make the impossible possible and build a future worth living for.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Varadkar for his statement.

In accordance with resolution 72/243, I now give the floor to Ms. Graça Machel, co-founder of The Elders.

Ms. Machel (The Elders): It is my singular honour to address this collective home of the human family. I would like to thank President Espinosa Garcés and Secretary-General Guterres for calling this special meeting to celebrate Nelson Mandela's life and his legacy of peacemaking. I thank the General Assembly for this privilege. I stand here not as a diplomat, but as a human rights advocate and concerned citizen of the world, so forgive me in advance for the unrestrained manner in which I will share my frank thoughts with the Assembly today.

Today's celebration of the legacy of Nelson Mandela, or Madiba, as he was affectionately known, provides an appropriate opportunity to reflect on the very raison d'être of the United Nations. In October 1945, the founding members of the United Nations made this pledge, first and foremost, in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations:

> "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

It strikes me with gratifying humility that, at this moment of reflection, we associate Nelson Mandela as a reference point to help guide us in fulfilling that supreme mandate. Indeed, Madiba's legacy as a freedom fighter, peacemaker and statesman speaks to the core of our greatest aspirations for the United Nations and for humankind. The purpose of this celebration of Madiba's life and his contributions to the world is twofold — to take inspiration from the values he embodies and to emulate his unwavering commitment to freedom, equality, justice and dignity for all.

Let me pause here and bring to mind the legacy of Kofi Annan, my dear brother and fellow Elder, who also embodied the values that the United Nations holds dear. His moral fortitude and commitment to justice should also serve as an inspiration to shape the international community into a more stable, peaceful and equitable one.

The United Nations finds itself at a moment when it would be well served by revisiting and reconnecting to the vision of its founders, as well as by taking direction from Madiba's servant leadership and courage. His example of servant leadership reminds us that no sacrifice is too great to ensure the respect and protection of one's people. He deeply believed that there is nothing more sacred than safeguarding the rights of all human beings — not the preservation of ego, not partisan politics and not geopolitical considerations.

An expert in brinkmanship and a keen strategist, Madiba spent nearly three decades of his life as a political prisoner, and many years thereafter negotiating the complexities of peacemaking and nation-building. We seek inspiration from his successful approach. While staying true to his ultimate goal of freedom and social justice, he took the interests of his adversaries into consideration. He silenced his ego and took risks. He gave value to the principle of give-and-take and negotiated in good faith.

The United Nations was shaped by our collective desire to prevent conflict and ensure that never again would war engulf nations the world over. Yet more than 70 years later, today's newsreels are full of conflict-ridden headlines, signalling significant discord within our international community. Global security has deteriorated markedly over recent decades. The number of armed conflicts has increased, and the protracted conflicts that have been ravaging our global family for decades are particularly worrisome to me. Our collective consciousness must reject the lethargy that has accustomed us to death and violence as if wars were legitimate and somehow impossible to terminate. There is no justification for the loss of life and suffering in places such as Syria, Yemen, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Myanmar, to mention just a few. That has been going on far too long.

Thousands of our children, just like our own sons and daughters, have been robbed of the joys of childhood. Thousands of women, no different from our own sisters and mothers, have been brutalized by rape as a weapon of war. Thousands of our brothers and sisters have been needlessly maimed or killed. Thousands of families similar to our own have been ripped apart and left destitute. It is time to say "enough is enough".

I appeal to the members of the General Assembly not to let this be just another summit of statements. Bold, unprecedented action must follow. As for me, the meaning of celebrating Madiba is to work to end this senseless violence as a matter of priority and urgency. I encourage the Assembly to interrogate and dismantle what is fuelling these conflicts — ego-driven decision-makers, rigid political dogmas, greedy acquisition of resources and the massive arms industry, to name just a few. It is time for every leader here to take responsibility — those who are directly involved in the atrocities plaguing our world, those who take sides and those who sit in silence. As the leaders of our time, they have a moral imperative, and the ability, to bring to an end the death and destruction we witness on a daily basis. Colombia has proved it can be done. Others can follow that example. History will judge those here should they stagnate too long in inaction. Humankind will hold them accountable should they allow suffering to continue on our watch.

I am speaking as a woman who has experienced first-hand the pain and misery of war. In 1996, on behalf of then-Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, I published a report (see A/51/306) on the devastating impact of armed conflict on children. My colleagues and I embarked on two years of research that took us to conflict settings in every corner of the globe. I was just a mother then, horrified by stories of frightened children and grief-stricken mothers in refugee and displaced-person camps. Today I am a grandmother, still haunted by their eyes and still sitting with a heavy heart, knowing that the fate of children in conflict settings has gotten worse. The voice of a Palestinian child still whispers to me, asking "When is this is going to end?" And I know that that boy, now a young person, is still in a Palestinian refugee camp.

We cannot rest until we right these wrongs. And to do so we must work more collaboratively with those beyond this Hall. We therefore actively support Secretary-General António Guterres in putting peace at the top of his agenda. Peacemaking requires more than a political response; it also requires the muscle of the private sector, civil-society organizations and citizens at the grass roots as well. For example, 25 years ago, the African institution ACCORD was established to contribute to resolving Africa's conflicts so as to create the conditions necessary for human security, economic prosperity and social cohesion. Today, after working on almost all of Africa's protracted conflicts, we know that working for peace alone will not deliver those goals. Peace, together with governance and development, is the only approach that can ensure stability. In July of this year, therefore, President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa and ACCORD launched a new initiative, Global Peace, to take ACCORD's experience from Africa and the global South and extend our solidarity across the world. Global Peace will make a modest contribution to transforming how nations drive development and stability. It will promote an ecosystem of innovators, influencers, investors and the implementers to generate innovative solutions to the challenges of our time. This civil-society initiative will complement the efforts of Governments and multilateral agencies and strengthen multilateralism.

When Madiba founded The Elders in 2007, he gave us a specific mandate:

> "To support courage where there is fear; to force agreement where there is conflict; and to inspire hope where there is despair".

We Elders spent the past year leading up to Madiba's hundredth birthday identifying and showcasing 100 inspirational civil-society organizations of all sizes and from every part of the world. Each of those 100 organizations represents one of 100 ideas for a freer, fairer world. They work with a commitment to finding what unites their communities, and through collective efforts they are achieving peace, justice, health and equality in their communities. On behalf of The Elders, I have the honour to present to the General Assembly an inspiring publication featuring these "Sparks of Hope", which I will hand to President Espinosa Garcés and Secretary-General Guterres when I conclude my remarks. This compendium highlights the moral courage and leadership of change agents across the world, and I hope members will take inspiration from their work to accelerate social transformation.

In conclusion, I challenge the Assembly with Madiba's words: "It is in your hands to make a better world for all who live in it". It is therefore incumbent on us to live up to the cherished Charter of the United Nations, which asks us to

> "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and untold sorrow to mankind and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

And I quote Madiba again: "It is in your hands".

The President: I thank Ms. Machel for her statement and for the 100 "Sparks of Hope".

(*spoke in Spanish*)

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/243, I now give the floor to Mr. Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

Mr. Naidoo (Amnesty International): We welcome the broad sentiments in the draft political declaration that Governments have agreed on for the Mandela Peace Summit. But the truth is that we have heard them before. These are the words that get repeated time and time again without the political will, urgency, determination or courage needed to make them a reality and to make them really count. But we must make them count — not tomorrow, but right now, because we are facing multiple crises around the world with people suffering on an unimaginable scale. Without action, without strong and principal leadership, I fear for them and for all of us.

Let us remember that Madiba spent the vast majority of his life as a civil-society activist. Yet as we gather here to honour him today, thousands of activists and human rights defenders around the world are imprisoned or have been tortured or killed. They include trade unionists, people from non-governmental organizations, social movements and religious communities, journalists and those from the field of the arts and culture. In far too many countries, the civic space has been shut down and people deprived of their right to participate actively and freely in public life.

The Preamble to the founding Charter of the United Nations opens with the words "We the peoples", not "we Member States". That is why we, the people, should never allow ourselves to accept injustice. As Martin Luther King once said,

> "I never intend to adjust myself to racial segregation and discrimination. I never intend to adjust myself to religious bigotry. I never intend to adjust myself to economic conditions that will take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few when millions of God's children are smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in affluent societies."

I appeal to the General Assembly today, with the spirit of Madiba surrounding us all, not to adjust to the inhumane way that we have been treating millions of refugees around the world, not to adjust to the Rohingya population living in an open-air prison under a system of apartheid, not to adjust to the Palestinians in Gaza living under a relentless military blockade that keeps them in poverty and misery, not to adjust to the centuries-old subjugation of indigenous peoples, not to adjust to leaders who espouse xenophobic and fascist narratives or demean or undermine women.

Neither should we adjust to the bloodbaths we have seen in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, South Sudan and elsewhere, especially when most of the people shedding the blood are civilians and a large proportion of them are women and children. We should not adjust to the systematic exclusion of people living with disabilities or to the continuing struggle and marginalization of children and young people everywhere, for humankind must not judge itself by the progress of the most powerful but by the welfare of the most vulnerable. Indeed, we must take care not only of the present generation but those of the future as well. We should not adjust to the dismal failure of the powerful to protect civilians in conflicts. In particular, we must not adjust to the deadlock that continues to haunt the Security Council, whose five permanent members too often use their powers not to prevent and stop suffering, but to shield themselves and others committing the worst crimes.

We should not adjust to the disgraceful levels of impunity we see, and we should insist on full accountability for gross violations of human rights and crimes against humanity. On this, the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the twentieth anniversary of the Rome Statute, which gave birth to the International Criminal Court, we urge a renewed respect for the painstakingly developed conventions and norms of the United Nations. We call on nations that have not yet done so to join the International Criminal Court, particularly three permanent members of the Security Council — the United States, China and Russia.

We should not adjust to the continued inaction on averting catastrophic climate change while thousands are regularly devastated by extreme weather events from the Philippines to Puerto Rico, where we saw more than 3,000 lives lost, making it the biggest natural disaster in United States history. Neither, for that matter, should we adjust to the imminent reality facing small island States, whose very existence is under threat. To the one leader who still denies climate change, we insist that he start putting himself on the right side of history.

To my brothers and sisters I say, the time for bold and courageous action is now. I know what my fellow activists and advocates are facing, but I implore them not to give up. Let the words of Madiba inspire and guide us: "The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear". And to all our political leaders, I want to say that we honour Madiba by picking up the mantle, honestly and with integrity, of all the struggles he waged. The draft political declaration (A/73/L.1) to be adopted here today is an opportunity for renewed commitment in these troubled times. I say, let us think of the most powerless people in the world, those who will live or die as a consequence of our choices — and let us not disappoint them.

The President: I thank Mr. Naidoo for his statement.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

We have heard the last speaker for the opening meeting of the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit.

The Assembly will now turn to draft resolution A/73/L.1, entitled "Political declaration adopted at the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit". In the light of the time constraints and in order to ensure the expeditious conduct of proceedings, delegations wishing to make explanations of position are kindly encouraged to do so in their statements to be delivered in the debate and/or to submit them for circulation as official documents.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.1, entitled "Political declaration adopted at the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit". May I take it that the assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.1?

Draft resolution A/73/L.1 was adopted (resolution 73/1).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to express my sincere thanks to His Excellency Mr. Jerry Matjila, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, and Her Excellency Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, who ably and patiently conducted the discussions and complex negotiations in the informal consultations on the resolution 73/1. I am sure the members of the Assembly join me in expressing our sincere appreciation to them.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.